LETTERS FROM RUSSIAN PRISONS

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LETTERS FROM RUSSIAN PRISONS

Consisting of Reprints of Documents by Political Prisoners in Soviet Prisons, Prison Camps and Exile, and Reprints of Affidavits Concerning Political Persecution in Soviet Russia, Official Statements by Soviet Authorities, Excerpts from Soviet Laws Pertaining to Civil Liberties, and Other Documents.

With Introductory Letters by Twenty-Two Well-Known European and American Authors

Published for

The International Committee for Political Prisoners

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INTRODUCTION

RUSSIA presents the unique spectacle of a revolutionary government based on working-class and peasant power imprisoning and exiling its political opponents in other revolutionary parties. Old comrades in the struggle to overthrow the Tsar, who served terms together in exile and prison, are now split into hostile camps. The Bolsheviks in power send again to a new exile and prison their former comrades in suffering under the Tsar.

This book attempts to tell the story of these revolutionary political prisoners, chiefly in their own words. It does not presume to deal with those guilty of acts of violence nor those who participated in counter-revolutionary military forces. Against them the Soviet Government naturally proceeded, as do all governments against those who resort to violence to overthrow them. So far as we can get the facts, the prisoners with whom this book deals are intellectuals and working-class revolutionists imprisoned for the expression of their views and for their political activities in holding meetings, speaking, printing, selling their party literature and communicating with their party members and sympathizers abroad.

It does not touch the many Tsarists and others outside the radical parties who have also been imprisoned or exiled for their views. While this Committee stands in principle for freedom of opinion for them as for others, the material is confined to the more striking and unique position of the prisoners representing the revolutionary parties which differ with the Bolsheviks as to how the revolution should be carried out. We have tried to exclude all references to prisoners who joined active counter-revolutionary movements of violence, as did a considerable number of those in the revolutionary parties opposed to the Soviet Government. The difficulty of always distinguishing between them and the great majority in their parties who expressed opposition only by agitation is increased by the Soviet Government's refusal to dis-

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tinguish purely political prisoners as such and its designation of them all as "counter-revolutionaries". The essential fact stands out clear and unchallenged,—that the Soviet Government exiles and imprisons political opponents for their political activities and expressions in speech and print. Socialists, Syndicalists and Anarchists are the principal targets for attack, but Zionists and Tolstoians have also suffered.

It is this extraordinary aspect of the dictatorship in Russia that we present in the form of these documents because of the widespread interest in it, both among those outside of Russia who share the same political views as the persecuted, and among those friendly to the Soviet Government who deplore this particular policy.

The Communist attitude toward political persecution is that it is an issue of minor importance in the face of the colossal problems which have confronted and still confront the Soviet State, and that in a period of transition, severity in the treatment of all hostile elements is unavoidable. They say that Russia is relatively much less severe in its treatment of opponents compared with the reactionary governments of Italy, Spain, Poland and Hungary, for example, and with Germany, both today and under her former Socialist governments, and, indeed with California. They contend that the number of actual sentences to prison for political offences not involving violence is small and that the number of exiles has been grossly exaggerated by the propaganda of anti-Bolshevik groups in Berlin, Paris and elsewhere. They maintain that attacks upon the principle of the dictatorship are a violation of the constitution equivalent to offences penalized in many other countries as treasonable attempts to overthrow the established government. They point out that an honest effort has been made to improve prison conditions throughout Russia, both for politicals and others and that the Soviet Government is committed to the principles of a new penalogy. They cite the freedom in recent years of the Tolstoians, who are outspoken opponents of Bolshevism, and the recent abandonment of the use of the Solovetz Islands Prison Camp for political prisoners and the transfer to the mainland of the political prisoners formerly on those islands.

The chief answer to these arguments is that higher standards are expected of a new State devoted to the revolutionary conceptions of "the cooperative commonwealth", producers' control and the abolition of classes. Friends of social progress see no need for the perpetuation

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of the evil practices of Tsardom. They realize that the period of transition as defined by the Bolsheviks may last fifty years, and that it may continue indefinitely to be used as the excuse for political tyranny, though the Soviet Government appears to be the most secure in Europe. No claim of comparative virtue in the light of more vigorous persecution by reactionary governments is warranted.

Most of the material published previously concerning political persecution in Russia was so animated by bitter hostility to the Soviet Government that its value is slight. This Committee determined to present as dispassionate a picture as is consistent with the experiences of the prisoners themselves, and to let those exiled and imprisoned, who really know the facts, speak for themselves.

This Committee as such approaches the issue of Russian political prisoners without partisan interest, in the belief that the holding of political prisoners by any government blocks progress by stifling ideas and forces necessary to growth. But many of the members of the Committee as individuals regard the Russian Revolution as the greatest and most daring experiment yet undertaken to recreate society in the interests of the producers and in terms of human values, however faulty its course may have been and however discouraging its many compromises. Many of them look upon Russia today as a great laboratory of social experiment of incalculable value to the development of the world. It is for that reason, among others, that they are concerned that this first working-class government should not perpetuate the evil practices of reactionary governments the world over.

THE material here presented we believe to be authentic. It was obtained chiefly from officials of the persecuted revolutionary parties, in Berlin and Paris for the most part,—the Social Democrats (Mensheviks), the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Right and Left and the Anarchists. Their letters and testimony may be expected to represent the worst conditions of imprisonment and exile, and in that sense may be considered an exaggerated picture of the situation. Furthermore, prison letters frequently reflect a prison psychology prone to exaggerate and distort the picture of conditions as a whole. But even making allowance for the sources of the information, it constitutes a clear case for a complete change in policy.

The bulk of material dates from 1923 and 1924, and some from

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early in 1925. Only a few documents in the collection antedate 1922. They have been included either because they have some special reference to events that followd in later years or to present-day conditions. A number of documents dating from 1922 have been included because they illustrate particular phases of the development of political persecution. Practically all of them are corroborated by the contents of later documents.

The difficulties of getting up-to-date material can be understood only by taking into account the control in Russia by censorship and bureaucracy. Letters have had to be smuggled out of the prisons, the concentration camps and places of exile, as is the case in many other countries, and so reach their destination very tardily. How difficult is smuggling letters from prison will be seen in the fact that the letter from the Socialist prisoners in the Solovetz Islands was written on small scraps of paper in almost microscopic script. (See page 193). The letter begins with the direction in somewhat larger writing that it is to be read with the aid of a magnifying glass. Any more bulky communication might not have escaped the prison administration's hands. After the document has been gotten out of Russia, there comes the investigator's task of learning of it, getting in touch with the individual or committee who received it, and securing permission to examine and use it. Finally the task of inducing an old revolutionary to go before a notary and swear to a document's authenticity is by no means easy. Many of the revolutionary exiles are living abroad illegally on spurious passports and are afraid to present themselves before any official for fear of deportation. Others consider it a reflection on their veracity to be asked to fortify their declarations by an oath before a notary. Others, like many of the anarchists, will have nothing to do with government officials. And many of the exiles are so weary of the whole business of trying to convince a reluctant radical and liberal world that there is still political persecution in Russia that they refuse to take any steps whatever. So it should astonish no one that a year or even two elapses between the writing of prison letters and their publication in any authoritative form.

With the exception of three or four documents(whose authenticity has been otherwise proved) every document has been certified by a trustworthy person familiar with the document, with its author or authors and their handwritings or signatures. If the document was

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not a signed communication, the certificate was made by a person familiar with the original and able to swear to its authenticity. The Committee has in its possession either the originals or copies,—(the copies sometimes both in the Russian and in translation, sometimes only in translation). But in all cases the certificate of the person authenticating the document, sworn to in most cases before a notary, attached to the document or its copy, is in our hands. In a number of instances facsimile photographs have been made of the originals, a few of which are reproduced in the text. The translations of the letters and documents were made abroad by persons specially qualified for the task and they have in many instances attached their certificates to their translations. The signatures of politicals upon many of the documents have been omitted for obvious reasons.

RECENT letters from Russia indicate that similar conditions still exist, and Dr. Harry F. Ward's article in *The Nation* for March 4, 1925, throws some light on conditions which he discovered in a personal investigation in the summer of 1924.

The following paragraphs from that article cover the essential points of Dr. Ward's findings:

"It is frankly stated by prison administrators that there are three classes of 'politicals'—spies, counter-revolutionaries, and members of other political parties. Concerning the last category it is added that of course they must be active. This classification is confirmed by those engaged in relief work for political prisoners and by those who try and sentence them. It is as impossible as it was during the post-war repression in the United States to get a real definition either of what counter-revolution in fact is or of what degree of activity constitutes guilt on the part of members of other political parties. One gets only the general statement that they must be actively working against the Government.

"It is impossible to state accurately how many political prisoners there are at present in Russia. Lists prepared by exiles in Berlin are necessarily inaccurate. The organizations engaged in relief work for such prisoners have no detailed figures. They simply know that there are more than 1,000. They are sure that there are about 500 in camps and that somewhere around 1,500 in all have been 'sent away'. There were a great many arrests last spring under the new regulations dealing with 'economic counter-revolution'. Recently the number has decreased. The official statement is that most recent and current arrests are for proscribed economic activity.

"Concerning the treatment of politicals, the first thing said by those who are working for its improvement in Russia is that the statements of brutality circulated by exiles are exaggerated. It is agreed that when such cases are reported, they are now looked into and remedied. . . . .

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"There are various degrees of being 'sent away' for those charged with political and economic offenses. The economic offender may be exiled from Russia, the political to one of the Siberian colonies. Either may be sent to a certain city or town or village to remain there, on parole as it were. Or they may be given a choice of cities or of a location within a certain area. The hardships under this system come from the fact that the persons sent away are left to shift for themselves in a strange environment. Sickness, unemployment and lack of clothing therefore make demands upon relief agencies; so does the task of locating deportees and keeping them in touch with relatives and friends.

"Two agencies for this purpose are operating in Russia. They are popularly known as the Political Red Cross and the Political Black Cross. The latter aids Anarchists alone, because these persons by nature and by faith prefer to be helped by their own kind. The Political Red Cross aids prisoners of all sorts, including the Anarchists when their own organization is inadequate. Both of these bodies operate without interference. They can correspond with persons abroad, and the Government informs them as to the location of prisoners. . . . .

"While politicals may not, like ordinary criminals, automatically obtain a review of their cases with a view to possible release when half their sentence has been served, the G. P. U. states that a system of parole is being applied to them and that it has already recommended to the Central Executive Committee of the Government several partial amnesties. . . . .

"How far these reforms will be carried and whether they will reach the fundamental point of total abolition of secret procedure, it is yet too early to foretell. . . . .

"In the broader area of civil liberties in Russia there is little change to be recorded. The situation is parallel to that in some of our industrially controlled areas. While freedom of assemblage is theoretically possible, practically it is impossible because of the control of the means or organization and places of meeting. In the matter of freedom of organized speech and even of political organization, the constitution is in practice nullified. There is, however, increasing freedom of individual expression. . . . .

"Of freedom of the press there is none. It is directly denied, not indirectly as with us. The censor is still omnipotent if not omniscient. The multitude of periodicals and pamphlets and books all bear his imprint. The most serious fact in the situation is the regimenting of the universities which will result from the recent 'cleansing'." . . . .

The Committee publishing this material does so not only to present what ought to be generally known, but to create, if it is possible, an opinion on the issue which will be effectively expressed to the Soviet Government. Time and again the issue of political prisoners in Russia has been raised, but usually from sources which were using it to discredit the Bolsheviks. This book will probably be so regarded by Communists who are so partisan that they consider everything other than

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unquestioning loyalty to the Soviet Government as a counter-revolutionary attack upon it.

We realize that partisan use may be made of the material, and by parties who would if they were in power in Russia deal no better with political opponents than the Bolsheviks. But we cannot withhold the material for fear of misuse. We do not believe that, however used, it can damage the essential development of the Russian experiment. No obligation of friendship for that experiment transcends the plain duty to speak out against the kind of persecution, exiles and treatment which the letters and documents in this book so abundantly prove. The Soviet Government's policies are a matter of concern throughout the world among all those who have opposed the counter-revolutionary efforts to destroy it, and who have insisted on the complete recognition of the Soviet Government. While that is not the official concern of a committee dealing only with the issue of freedom of opinion, it represents the view and activity of so many members of the Committee that it should be stated here.

As a practical course of action, relief for these prisoners and exiles can be organized and sent through channels recognized by the Soviet Government. Our Committee will forward money, books, food and clothing just as it does for political prisoners in other countries where relief agencies are permitted to operate. The cooperation and aid of those interested will be welcomed.

ROGER N. BALDWIN

For the Committee.

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List of Abbreviations

The Center—Means, as a rule, Moscow, the central government.

Dry Hunger-Strike—Means a hunger-strike during the course of which the politicals abstain from drinking any kind of fluid as well as from solid food.

Etape—Method by which the politicals are sent into exile. They are, by this method, sent by slow stages, in prison convoys, often in special prison cars, known as "Stolypin" cars, after the famous Czarist minister; are held over at local jails, by the way, while other prisoners (political or criminal) are collected, until, after weeks, they arrive at the place of exile to which they are being sent. The last stage, when the place of exile, as not infrequently happens, is at some distance from the railway station, has usually to be completed on foot. This was the usual system employed by the Czar's government, and has been adopted by the Soviet government for many, although not all, of its political exiles.

"G. P. U."—Is the abbreviation for the State Political Department, established by decree of 1922 (see Part VI.) to take the place of the Tcheka, after the latter had been abolished. It was placed under the civil authorities, and ostensibly was greatly restricted (in comparison with the Tcheka) in its powers.

Golos Truda—The Voice of Labor, an Anarchist publication and organization.

Inner Prison—Means special prisons organized by the Tcheka or "G. P. U." for detention of political prisoners while their cases are under investigation. Such prisons exist in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Kiev, Odessa, etc. As will be seen from the documents, the conditions for politicals in these prisons were much worse than in the politicals' wards of the regular prisons, such as the Butyrky, Moscow.

Izvestia—Official newspaper in Moscow.

Katorga—Hard labor in prison or exile.

Katorgiani—Prisoner condemned to hard labor.

Kronstadters—Usually means the sailors who revolted in Kronstadt in February, 1921, and whose revolt was suppressed. Those that have survived, are, for the most part, still in the jails or concentration camps or places of exile.

Left S. R.—Is the abbreviation sometimes used for Left Socialist Revolutionists. This party was formed by the fraction which split off from the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1917.

"O. G. P. U."—Is the abbreviation for the Central, All-Russian "G. P. U."

Okhrana—The old Czarist secret police.

Obstruction—Means a form of noisy protest adopted by politicals in prison against some action or refusal to act, by the authorities.

P. I. C.—People's Commissariat for Interior.

Political Red Cross (Sometimes mentioned simply as "The Red Cross")—Where not otherwise identified, means the organization for aid to politic-

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al prisoners, now being conducted with the sanction of the government, by Madame Peshkova, Maxim Gorky's former wife. This remarkable woman, together with Vera Figner and others, has devoted years of her life to this work, in an unassuming manner, without complaint, despite all the difficulties involved in her task.

Pravda—Newspaper in Moscow. Communist and regarded as official.

Presidium—Means the directing committee of a government body. So in the documents you have frequent reference to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, etc.

R. S. F. S. R.—Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. This was the title of the new Russian State before the constitution of 1922 which adopted the new title, S. S. S. R.

Solovki—Abbreviation for Solovetz Islands in the Arctice Circle where was situated the concentration camp in which many of the politicals were imprisoned.

S. R.—Is the abbreviation used in some of the documents for Right Socialist Revolutionists, the fraction of the Socialist Revolutionary Party remaining after the split with the "Lefts" in 1917.

S. S. S. R.—Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

Starosta—The elected representative of the politicals to negotiate all matters at issue between the politicals and government or the prison authorities. This special organization of the politicals in prison was permitted under the Czar, and the right to it was reconquered by the politicals in Soviet Russia.

Tchéka—Is the abbreviation for the Extraordinary Commission in charge of protecting the revolution and suppressing counterrevolution and political opposition. Abolished in 1922 and replaced by the "G. P. U."

Tchekist—Agent of the Tcheka.

U. S. S. R.—This has been used in some of the documents meaning the same as S. S. S. R.

Union of S. S. R.—Means the same.

Vetcheka—Abbreviation for Central, All-Russian Tcheka.

Vuz—Abbreviation for institution of higher learning.

WZIK—Is the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. This body is also referred to frequently as the Central Executive committee.

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Letters by Celebrated Intellectuals*

(*Aronld Bennett, British Novelist.*)

While taking no side among the various revolutionary parties in Russia, and while not prepared to regard the Soviet Government as worse than those of other countries, I am nevertheless persuaded that, for the sake of the intellectual life of Russia, the time has come when it would be wise to allow more freedom to such of the intelligentsia as are unable to cooperate politically with the Communist party. No government can avoid serious errors when all criticism has been silenced. And so long as the present severe repression continues Western nations will conclude that the existing Soviet authorities feel their position insecure. Cooperation with the advanced elements of the West is rendered difficult by the prolongation of a reign of terror such as revealed in this book, especially in view of the fact that many, if not most, of the present victims were as sincere advocates of the November Revolution as the Communists themselves.

ARNOLD BENNETT.

(*H. N. Brailsford, Editor of the New Leader, London.*)

So long as the civil power and the capitalistic powers intervened with arms and the weapons of boycott and blockade, it was possible to justify as a military necessity the suppression of liberty in Russia. With the end of the civil war and the *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Government by most of the Great Powers, no friend of the Russian people can continue to accept this excuse. The suppression of the freedom of speech, printing and association in Russia under a workers' government endangers its future and delays, by its ugly example, the acceptance of Sovietism by other peoples. The permanent suppression of these liberties must be the cause of endless cruelty and the waste of noble lives; it will mean also the rapid deterioration of the whole intellectual and moral life of any people which submits to it. Men cannot think where they do not freely debate.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

April 8, 1925.

*These letters were secured by Mr. Isaac Don Levine, who submitted much of the material in the book to the authors of the letters and who has aided in collecting the material. They were secured in order to add the weight of their views to the protest and appeal to the Soviet Government.

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(*Georg Brandes, Danish Critic.*)

Copenhagen, January 27, 1925.

Sir: Not a day passes that I do not receive fifty letters insisting on answers. Try to understand. My day is filled with necessary work. Sixty to seventy people are asking all day long by letter or personally an hour of my time. It is enough to drive me mad. But I shall answer you.

While reading Madame Emma Goldman's book and the letters of the Russian prisoners, I noted without astonishment but with deep indignation that the Russian revolution had bettered nothing. Cruelty and contempt for right to liberty have remained the same. It has taken a century to break the arbitrary power of the Czars. That has been accomplished, and in place of this power there is another, just as stupid and cowardly, a thousand times more hypocritical.

Will anything come of your efforts? It is for intelligent and big-hearted Russians to make answer.

GEORG BRANDES.

(*Karl Capek, Bohemian Dramatist, Author of "R. U. R."*)

Dear Sir: I have carefully read the documents which you sent me, just as I have examined other sources relating to juridical conditions in Soviet Russia. I cannot doubt the evidence I find there, but I do not venture to be a judge in matters which are outside my control. If I cannot do this I can at least make a request. In making it I am not allowing myself to be unjust either to the victims or to the persecutors. I am aware that the whole world is more or less accomplice in bringing about a condition of affairs where human life, law and humanity weigh so little with the representatives of the new Russian absolutism; we have passed through a war in which millions of innocent lives were lost, and ten or a hundred or a thousand new victims seem to be only another drop of blood added to the sea of suffering through which we have come. It is time to regain faith in mankind; it is time to see men as human beings and not as enemies. It is not death which is terrible; every day thousands of people die of cancer or tuberculosis without our having any doubts, on that account, of the value of human life. What is terrible is injustice and hatred. Do you, who organize or carry on terrorism against human souls, have any belief in the soul, in conscience, in something which is good and wonderful in mankind? If you do not believe in these things then you have no right to be a people's rulers; if you believe in any moral order, and if, despite that, you continue to act in such a manner as appears from the weighty and desperate testimony given by these martyred people, then woe be unto you; for you have betrayed man in his historic struggle against

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brutal atavism. You say that the world's bourgeoisie is against you; but a greater force than that is opposed to you, the conscience of the world is against you. And conscience is, and will be, more and more, a political and international factor; you have defeated your own cause by depriving yourselves of this ally.

I cannot, however, pass judgment, but I can make a request. I ask that lives be spared. KARL CAPEK.

(*Albert Einstein, Scientist.*)

You who read these letters and live under a well-ordered government are not to believe that the people surrounding you are better than or different from those carrying on a regime of frightfulness in Russia. You will contemplate with horror this tragedy of frightfulness in Russia. You will contemplate with horror this tragedy of human history in which one murders from fear of being murdered. And it is just the best, the most altruistic individuals who are being tortured and slaughtered—but not in Russia alone—because they are feared as a potential political force.

All serious people should be under obligation to the editor of these documents. Their publication should contribute to affecting a change in this terrible state of affairs. For the powers that be in Russia will be compelled to alter their methods after the appearance of these letters in print, if they desire to continue their attempt to acquire moral standing among the civilized peoples. They will lose the last shred of sympathy they now enjoy if they are not able to demonstrate through a great and courageous act of liberation that they do not require this bloody terror in order to put their political ideas in force. ALBERT EINSTEIN.

(*Knut Hamsun, Norwegian Author.*)

Reading these prisoners' letters one is amazed not so much by the cruelty and horrors revealed in them as by the imperishable faith that survives under all conditions in the hearts of men. It is this incredible faith that gives one strength and hope. The Russian Revolution, like all great movements toward freedom, was born of a deep sense of justice in the masses of the people. If there is a spark of the early fire left in the breasts of the rulers of Russia today—and we still cling to the belief that there is—they cannot permit the conditions disclosed in these letters to develop and drive root until the last humanitarian currents of the Revolution are polluted beyond redemption. If the friendliness of the intelligentsia of Western Europe is at all valued in Moscow, these thousands of imprisoned idealists should be set free at once and their energies and knowledge employed for the common good. Certainly the Tsarist

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system of administrative exile, which branded the old regime in the eyes of the civilized world, should now be abolished. Under the present revolutionary government every person should be accorded the right of a fair trial in court. May the publication of these letters awaken the conscience of the Soviet leaders and give them the spiritual courage necessary to demonstrate that justice is not dead in Russia.

KNUT HAMSUN.

(*Gerhardt Hauptmann, German Poet and Writer.*)

Dear Mr. Don Levine:

Intolerance against opinion can never be united with progress.

There were periods during the evolution of the Catholic church when souls were enchained and thinkers were burned at the stake. It is but poor consolation to humanity if at such times it has plenty to eat. But, despite the stifling of freedom of mind, men by no means had sufficient to eat. Any development which, like a steam-roller, would crush independent minds and souls, or take advantage of every expression of freedom of the spirit to load the individuals guilty of such expression with chains and throw them into a dungeon, would again bring about a hellish eclipse of earth and sky. Soul-murder is the worst kind of murder. What compensation could we offer the bird who is accustomed to fly in freedom through the sky, after we had clipped his wings? Ask him how you can still make him happy. "Wring my neck," he will answer you.

Thought processes can be dangerous only when they become stagnant under the influence of specific dogmatic ideas, when these dogmatic ideas become rigidly set and are accepted as the absolute truth; in short, are idolized. Then truly thinking commits suicide and falls into decay. In this state of affairs you have a death feud against all thought. A state whose ruler has sold himself to such idols of the Absolute has no real helmsman at all: a mere automaton has taken his place. And woe be it if this automaton holds the machinery of power in his hands. He will turn the State into a desert, even though the State should appear to enjoy a tenfold prosperity, like a field of ripe grain.

I am explaining myself to you thus in generalities, without being able to judge how much what I say will be useful for your book.

Rappallo, March 7, 1925. GERHARDT HAUPTMANN.

(*Sven Hedin, Swedish Author and Explorer and Scientist.*)

Stockholm, March 23, 1925.

Dear Sir: Overwhelmed with work as I am, I have not yet had time to peruse the MSS. you sent me.

But as a friend of Science and Intelligence and as friend of

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Russia and the Russian people I am very glad to express my sincere hope that the Russian intelligentsia which is now in prison or exile may get their liberty back again as soon as possible and get a chance to prove that without a solid frame of sound scientific activity the Russian people cannot win to prosperity. In the name of humanity I hope the Soviet Government will do their best and use their great power in helping all those who suffer and who are worthy of a better fate.

Sincerely yours,
SVEN HEDIN.

(*Bernard Kellerman, German Novelist, Author of "The Tunnel," "November Ninth," etc.*)

Dear Mr. Levine:

It would scarcely be possible to doubt the genuineness of the documents you intend to make public. You raise the curtain from before Russian prisons in which crowds of unhappy people are languishing away—not reactionaries, counter-revolutionists, but socialists and revolutionists who had already expiated their advocacy of the ideals of progress and socialism in Czarist jails. However, we can't ignore the fact that Czarist prisons and Czarist methods of treating political opponents seem to have been more humane than the Russian prisons and methods of today. Read, for example, the report of Lenin's sojourn in Siberia.

If there is a single spot on earth where rights of men, regardless of whether they be criminals or "only" political opponents, are spurned under foot, then it is the duty of whosoever still believes in justice and human dignity to point his finger at this spot continuously and emphatically until this spot disappears from the the earth. You, Mr. Levine, have done this. It is to your credit to have awakened the world, regardless of all other considerations, to conditions in Russian political prisons.

It is unbelievable that the Russian government, which identifies its aims with humanity and human dignity, can know of these conditions in the prisons and this martyrdom of the political prisoners. Probably it has been shamelessly lied to and deceived by its commissars and investigators.

The object of your publication, Mr. Levine, will be attained when the Russian government, aroused, will send incorruptible commissars to these places of sorrow. Then it is to be assumed with a certain amount of confidence that steps will be taken to effect an immediate remedy of the situation.

Yours, etc.

Berlin, January 16, 1925. BERNARD KELLERMAN.

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(*Selma Lagerlof, Swedish Novelist.*)

May he who sends these letters into the world succeed in bringing some relief to the unhappy Russian revolutionists that languish in prison and exile. SELMA LAGERLOF.

Märbacka, Febr. 4th, 1925.

(*Harold I. Laski, Professor at London University.*)

I have read with profound emotion the documents collected in this book. The Socialist Movement looks to the leaders of the Russian Revolution to make possible to all who have given years of effort to its service the opportunity for that freedom for which they so ardently fought. Western Socialists can hardly fail to feel that the refusal on the part of the Soviet Government to give their Socialist comrades the chance of a creative life is a blot upon their record which makes exceedingly difficult the frank resumption of cordial relations. It has made many in England who welcomed the Revolution feel strongly that the splendor of its purpose is marred by the tyrannical suppression of men whose loyal service to its ideals is beyond question. No Communist in Russia who came to the West but what would discover that the task of his Socialist comrades abroad would be far easier if he was prepared to treat Russian political prisoners with generosity and justice. HAROLD I. LASKI.

(*Sinclair Lewis, American Novelist*)

Katonah, New York,
July 29th, 1925.

Dear Mr. Levine:

The documents which you have gathered regarding the present treatment of political opponents by the Russian Government would seem by internal evidence to be genuine. If they really are, then it wll be necessary for the Soviets to change their methods or lose the sympathy of that enormous proportion of intelligent persons who have hitherto considered the Soviets not only the most reasonable but the most gallant experiment in government which the world has known. Doubtless, they have their side; doubtless they have feared that resolute radicalism would drift into the wishy-washy, facing-both-ways liberalism of other nations; doubtless they have regarded the disloyal, or even quarter-disloyal, members of their own class as more dangerous than the most belligerent foe.

But if after eight years of experiment, they can still carry on only by Spanish Inquisition or battlefield methods, then they confess weakness; and if they are really so superior in honor and honesty and ability to the ordinary machine politicians as we have believed, then they will admit tragic failure and give up. Perhaps they do not, how-

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ever, care for the opinion of outsiders. Then they must not mind being classed with the intolerant and inhuman and petty souls. But I believe that they themselves may well be ignorant of what is going on in their prisons, just as even our highest officials in America are often completely ignorant of what really goes on in our prisons and slums, and that they will hear the appeal of these outsiders, who have no selfish demand but only the longing to be able to trust Russia.

Sincerely yours,
SINCLAIR LEWIS.

To Mr. Isaac Don Levine.

(*Maurice Maeterlinck, Belgian Poet and Dramatist.*)

I believe that never has the struggle between the beast and the spirit been clothed with so pathetic a character as in these letters of the Russian intellectuals exiled in Siberia. From the depths of their inferno they dare defy the demons who surround them, and have no other weapon—they who ordinarily never have enough to still their hunger—but the hunger-strike. Calmly, heroically, without hope, they die, one by one, trying to make a little less frightful the fate of those who will perhaps follow, and they impose on themselves such suffering as sometimes makes an impression even on jailors who have scarcely a human trait left. This drama is being played out at this very moment at the other end of the earth; and the civilized world is so weary of protesting in vain against Soviet abominations that it no longer takes the trouble to raise its voice. . . .

March 11, 1925. MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

(*Thomas Mann, German Novelist.*)

Dr. Thomas Mann
Munich, Poschlinger str. I

27-2-'25.

Dear Sir: I am extremely obliged to you for sending me the "Letters from Bolshevist Prisons and Exile." I have studied the collection, and the impression the letters made on me has been so much the more terrible because they were so undoubtedly genuine. You do not wish to have any intrusion of politics in this matter; no more do I. But the question presents itself, and will inevitably be asked, what has really changed in Russia for the better or even changed at all as compared with former times, since the founding of this atheistic God-State, which is called Communism. I read that in one of these martyr abodes, where these letters were written, and which was formerly a church, they have removed all the religious images and symbols, and have put in their place the pictures of Lenin, Trotzky and Marx. I don't know how Lenin and Trotzky feel about this proceeding, but I am sure that Karl Marx would turn in his

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grave if news from the world of these letters should force its way through to him. I wish you every success in your humanitarian enterprise aimed at softening the inhumanity which the Russian government practices or believes must be tolerated in order that it may itself survive, and I gladly authorize you to make every use of these lines which you may consider necessary.

Yours sincerely,
THOMAS MANN.

(*Karin Michaelis, Danish Novelist*)

Since reading these letters from men and women perishing in Russian Bolshevist prisons, my days and nights have been haunted with a terrible feeling of guilt. Yes, I *am* guilty, as long as I do nothing to protest and try to secure freedom for these martyrs. . . .

I received the book at noon one day, when the sky was sparkling with sun. Standing at my piano, I opened the cover, intending to glance at the book. Important work would hinder me from reading it. But my eyes fell upon some words which forced me to read the whole page. Standing I read. Still reading as the sun was setting. Still reading as the darkness blurred the letters. The room grew black as a grave. My eyes burned, my heart thumped like a hammer, my throat was sore from stifled cries. And when the night came I found no sleep. And when the day dawned I did not see nor feel the sun.

More than once I wished—to my shame—that I had never seen the book. And now, now I wish and want every real human being to read it, once, and again and again, until he, like me, will know no rest or joy before he has done his little bit in order to help his brothers and sisters.

Don't say it is impossible. Don't say this is interference with the internal matters of another country. You can, you must, raise your voice.

KARIN MICHAELIS.

(*Romain Rolland, French Author, Pacifist.*)

Villeneuve, February 2, 1925.

Dear Sir: I return to you by registered mail the collection of documents which you have sent me.

This is an ignominy! One wrings one's hands in sorrow and disgust. But there are almost identical things going on in the prisons of Poland; you have them in the prisons of California, where they are martyrizing the workingmen of the I. W. W.; you have them in Jougoslavia; you have them in the English dungeons of the Andaman Islands, into which have been cast the Indian patriots. Each week similar cries of sorrow and accusation come to me from some country of the world.

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I will not write the introduction which you ask of me. It would become a weapon against one party in the hands of other parties who are neither better nor worse.*

I do not indict a system, but Man. No one knows whether ferocity or stupidity predominates in him. And perhaps the latter is most formidable. You can defend yourself against ferocity; you can even flatter yourself, at times, that you may overcome it. But against stupidity you are defenseless. Yours, etc.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

(*Bertrand Russell, British Philosopher.*)

I sincerely hope that the publication of the following documents will contribute towards the promotion of friendly relations between the Soviet Government and the Governments of Western Powers. Misled by Western Socialists, the statesmen of Great Britain, France and America regard the present holders of power in Russia as idealists and therefore dangerous. If they will read this book they will become convinced of their error. The holders of power in Russia, as elsewhere, are practical men, prepared to inflict torture upon idealists in order to retain their power. There can be no reason why Western imperialists should quarrel with these imperialists of the Northeast, or why Western friends of freedom should support them until there is a radical change in their treatment of political opponents.

February 6, 1925. BERTRAND RUSSELL.

(*Arthur Schnitzler, Austrian Writer.*)

Dr. Arthur Schnitzler, 14-4-1925.
Wien xviii. Sternwartestrasse 71.

Dear Mr. Levine:

The documents out of the Russian prisons have filled me with disgust and bitterness—unfortunately, I cannot add—with astonishment. At the present time, when Terror as an element of public policy is recognized as legitimate, not only by the underlings of governments but also by its leaders, at such a time there is no injustice, no knavery, no barbarity which is not excused by the convenient and cowardly pretext of political necessity.

You wish, my dear Mr. Levine, to make an appeal to the Bolshevist rulers to give up or at any rate to relax their regime with regard to their political opponents, and ask me among others to join in this appeal. The very fact that such an appeal at all has become

*In the letter to M. Rolland, accompanying the documents, M. Rolland was asked for "a few lines expressing your sentiments for publication as a prefactory note to this book," without suggesting to M. Rolland in any way the character of the reply.

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necessary leaves small hope that it will be of much avail. Yet if, nevertheless, that should turn out to be the case even in a modest degree, we must not imagine it would be because our appeal touched the heart of the jailers: for to persons who think mainly along political lines even humanity will only be a pawn in the game and never a moral necessity.

This letter is naturally at your disposal to use as you may see fit.

Yours, etc.

Mr. Isaac Levine, Berlin. ARTHUR SCHNITZLER.

(*Upton Sinclair, American Author.*)

June 29, 1925.

Mr. Isaac Don Levine,
11 Van Nest Place,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Levine:

I have found time to glance through the documents which you have sent me dealing with the treatment of political prisoners in Russia, and I am greatly shocked to discover that conditions of such prisoners in Russia are about the same as the condition of political prisoners in the state of California, of which I am a citizen. I have had occasion to visit the prisoners in California and to inspect the conditions under which they exist, and you will understand therefore that I feel more moved to activity on behalf of these prisoners than on behalf of prisoners in Russia, concerning whose fate I know only indirectly.

I recognize the right of a state to protect itself against those who actually commit crimes of violence against it; I understand that such acts of political crime have been committed in Russia, as for example, the attempt to assassinate Lenin. Nothing of the kind has happened of recent years in the United States, and none of the political prisoners in California have even had charged against them any acts of violence. In this respect, therefore, it appears that the state of California is far behind the government of Russia in its standard of civilization.

With regard to the treatment of all political prisoners: I am opposed to any more cruelty than that necessarily involved in their restraint. I have protested against the atrocious cruelties committed against the men in the state of California, who have been convicted of holding forbidden opinions and are being incarcerated therefor. I have protested in vain, so perhaps it would be well for me to turn my attention to Russia and see if I cannot have better success. To my comrades in Russia, speaking as one Socialist agitator to other Socialist agitators, I say that, considered purely from a practical standpoint, humanity to political prisoners will pay in its propaganda value far more than it will cost in roubles, and I hope that the working-class

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government of Russia will be moved to set a higher standard than the capitalist state in which I live.

Sincerely,
UPTON SINCLAIR.

(*H. G. Wells, British Novelist.*)

4 Whitehall Court (Flat 120)

April 5, 1925.

Dear Mr. Levine:

I regret that I am not in a position to judge the authenticity of your collection of letters, nor do I see why you should be so anxious for me to contribute my comments to the book.* The suppression of political opposition by force, when it does not itself meet force, is a crime on the part of the government. The Bolshevik Government seems to me to be rather more stupid and illiberal in the matter than most other governmnets except perhaps the Fascist adventurers at present in possession of Italy, and the Russian prisons are and always have been abominable.

H. G. WELLS.

(*Rebecca West, British Novelist.*)

Those who like rather than dislike humanity and are concerned with its future well-being are proud to uphold the Soviet Government for many reasons. It is certainly preferable to the Tzardom, which was politically, socially and economically abominable, and gilded its abominations with the specious romanticism of its charming and criminal aristocracy. We have been with it in its resistance to the interventions in its affairs which were supported by Great Britain chiefly because our privileged class wished to safeguard the interests of its order all over the world; and we have blushed when we have seen it attacked in our country by all our most notorious political liars with such ugly figments as the forged decree concerning the nationalization of women.

But if the Soviet Government imagines it can count on our support without earning it by adherence to certain fundamental decencies, it is mistaken. It is true that an uncritical devotion is felt towards it by many members of the English Radical Movement at the present moment, but this is simply a flush of international sentiment such as comes from time to time and passes away if its object does not provide it with a real basis for continuance of the enthusiasm. It is no more deeply rooted than the sympathy with French Syndicalism, which was widely felt in England ten to fifteen years ago;

*There was no opportunity to submit to Mr. Wells, even if he had had the time and inclination to read them, the affidavits on which the documents were based.

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and like that it will pass away unless the Soviet Government makes certain concessions to reality. It must give its citizens the right to free speech, free association, and a free press; and it must treat its political prisoners as if it were sane and a stable government and not a frightened old woman who has seen a mouse. If it fail to do so, we in England cannot compromise our position by supporting it; for that would be to render ridiculous and inconsistent our demand, which is a vital part of our movement, that those liberties should be the birthright of our fellow-subjects in India, in Egypt, and in the British Empire generally. Should the Soviet Government not meet us on these points it will find that, in spite of its present popularity, in five years there will be no greater feeling of loyalty and amity towards it in the heart of the English Radical Movement than there is today towards Italian Fascismo. REBECCA WEST.

(*Israel Zangwill, British Author.*)

I have read these letters from non-Bolshevist prisoners and exiles with wonder at the incredible heroism of the sufferers and the incredible cruelty or stupidity of the Bolshevist Government. I do not know that in the present tragic tangle of European affairs anything an Englishman may write can have any influence upon the rulers of Russia. But it is surely the worst of propaganda for their cause that the workers of the world, whom they wish to unite, should come to learn that pity, humanity, and a reasonable freedom of opinion have no more place under their regime than in the old Tzarist Russia, and that even those who risked life and happiness to save Russia are treated no better than the representatives of the order they fought to overthrow.

The fact, however, that the hunger-strike is so largely used by the prisoners as a means of combating their tyrants is my one source of hope. For the hunger-strike is a moral weapon and can be used only against those whose moral sense is still alive. Some belief therefore in their oppressors, some bond of fraternal feeling must exist, and it is to this that I would venture to appeal. It may be that the true facts are unknown to the real heads of Russia, and that this book in enlightening them may effect the abolition of the abominable cruelties. But if the Soviet Gevernment persists in them, surely it will lose all influence upon those outside Russia not unsympathetic to social experimentation, surely it will destroy its last hope of linking up with Western civilization and the common fabric of human idealism.

Incidentally I note that a number of the prisoners are Jews, which serves at least to show how untrue is the identification of the race with Bolshevism. ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

January 31, 1925.

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Part I

Exile

NOTE: Considerable of the material connected with this subject is contained incidentally in documents that deal principally with other subjects. Only those documents bearing pretty directly on "Exile" have been included in this section. The balance of the material on "Exile" will either be found in the other sections of this volume or has been omitted, owing to lack of space. Decree and regulations establishing administrative exile will be found in the section devoted to laws, page 296.

Exile and deportation abroad, since the enactment of this decree and the so-called "instructions" under which it was carried out, as before its enactment, is imposed without any public trial whatsoever, "for the purpose of isolating persons connected with counter-revolutionary acts, with regard to whom permission is asked of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for isolation above a period of two months". The sentence is imposed by a Special Commission, under the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, consisting of representatives from that department and from the Commissariat of Justice. The usual proceeding seems to be, the arrest of a suspect, his confinement to one of the "inner" prisons of the "G. P. U.", his eventual transfer to a less rigorous imprisonment in a prison for the politicals, such as that of the Butyrky in Moscow, or the Shpalerka in Leningrad. Sometimes he is examined soon after his arrest, by a magistrate. Later he is sometimes again examined by the Special Commission, or its representatives. He seldom, if ever, seems to have the opportunity to produce testimony on his own behalf, witnesses, etc., or have the services of counsel. Finally, the sentence is communicated to him, sometimes in writing, as well as the section or section of the code under which he is sentenced. Latterly, during the last two years, at any rate, proceedings have been somewhat regularized. The prisoner is apt to have some sort of a formal hearing very soon after his arrest; his term of detention before exile or deportation is no longer indefinite (although see page 222), and he usually gets his sentence in writing, together with the code section under which he was convicted. In some cases the political is given a short period of freedom in which to get ready to leave. Also, he is sometimes permitted to proceed at his own expense by train to his place of exile. This does not apply to politicals who are considered dangerous, who are sent under "G. P. U." escort by etape to their destinations. The chief complaints (besides the persecution itself) that the political exiles have to make, as far as can be gathered from the documents, are: (1) The unneces-

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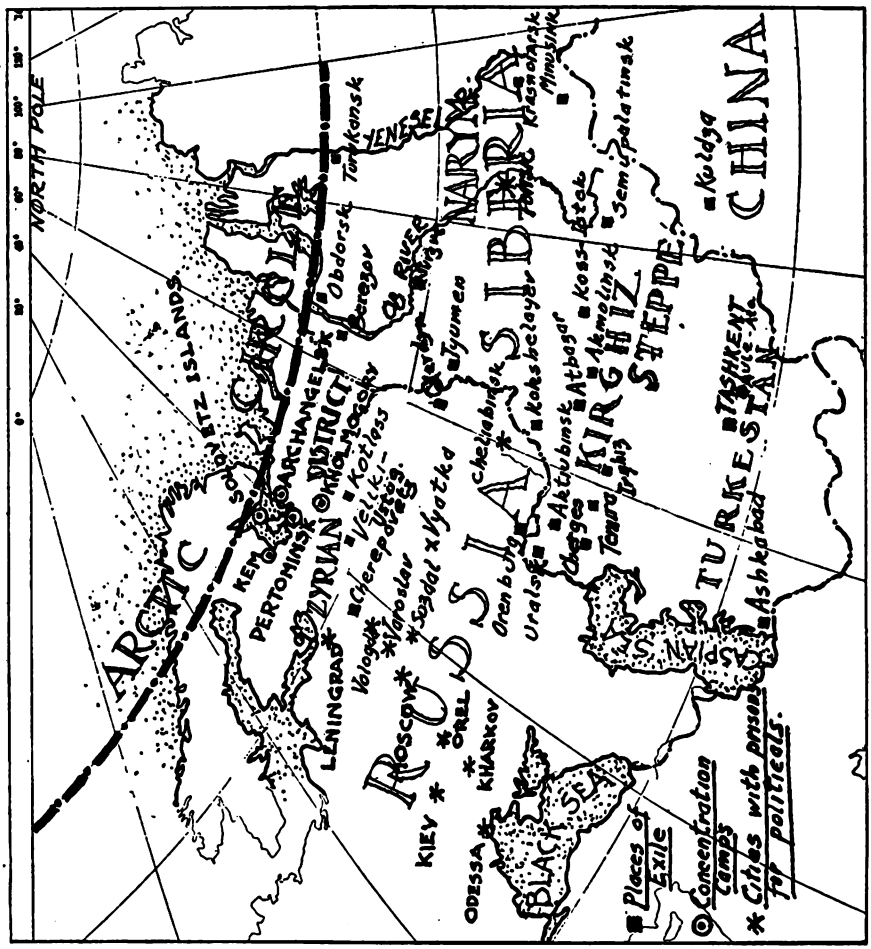

MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF PRISONS, PLACES OF EXILE AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS

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sary delay in disposal of their cases. (2) The refusal of permission to see their relatives and prepare properly for departure. (3) The sending by the etape system, not direct to the place of destination, but by slow stages, in prison convoys, from provincial prison to provincial prison. Weeks are sometimes consumed in the trip, the political suffers from the dirt and filth of the local prison, the brutality of local officials, the lack of proper care. The final stage of the journey is usually made on foot, as the place of exile seems usually to be far away from the nearest railway station. This etape system was employed by the Czar's government. (5) The remoteness of the places where the political is sent, hundreds of miles from a railway station, in the wilds of Northen Siberia, among savage tribes. (6) The harassing of the political by the local police officials ("G. P. U."), their power, apparently to send him from one place to another at will, and their power to prevent him from getting local employment, either privately, or in government offices. (7) The inadequacy of the allowance (said to be only three dollars a month) given each political. (8) The re-arrests of politicals, contrary, apparently to the law, at the expiration of their terms of exile. (9) As far as the politicals deported abroad are concerned, their chief complaint is against the sentence itself, which usually reads "forever," instead of a term of years.

TWO SENTENCES

Excerpts from Minutes

Sitting of the Collegiate Board of the "G. P. U." (Judicial) of April 8, 1922

Considered:	Resolved:
Case No. 7274, Petroff, Vladimir Ivanovitch, accused of belonging to the active part of the Left S.-R. Party. Arrested October 24, 1920; kept in Yaroslav prison. Report presented by Comrade P. Kuzmin. Confirmed by Comrade Unschlicht.	To be exiled to Archangelsk, under the control of the Provincial Section of the G. P. U. for 3 years, without subtracting the period of preliminary detention. A copy of this decision to be forwarded to the Archangelsk provincial "G. P. U." Case to be suspended and to be sent to the Archives of the 5th Section of the Secret Department of the G. P. U.

Secretary of the Collegiate Board of the "G. P. U." (Signature)

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VERDICT AGAINST THE NIKOLAEV COMRADES

Case No. 14320. Citizens Pik, Jacob Mikhailovitch; Cohen, Naum Israelovitch; Konotorovitch, Michael Lazarevitch; Tomashpolsky, Gregor Semionovitch; Ostromukhoff, Marc Savelievitch; Granovsky, Aron Yakovlevitch; Mazanoff, Fedor Petrovitch, and Dorofeeff, Nicholas Petrovitch.

On April 18, 1922, I, Assistant Chief of the 2nd Section of the Secret Department of the "G. P. U.", Shimankevitch, having examined the case No. 14320 sent over from the Ukrainian "G. P. U." accusing the above-named citizens of active anti-Soviet propaganda in the city of Nikolaev, and taking into consideration that the accusation is proved in the process of examination, propose:

That citizens Pik, J. M.; Cohen, N. I.; Konotorovitch, M. I.; Tomashpolsky, G. S.; Ostromukhoff, M. S.; Granovsky, A. Y.; Mazanoff, F. P., and Dorofeeff, N. P., should be banished in charge of the plenipotentiary representative of the "G. P. U.", in Turkestan, to live there under the open supervision of the local organs of the G. P. U. for the period of one year from the moment of their arrival to Turkestan.

A copy of this conclusion to be sent to the plenipotentiary representative of the Turkestan "G. P. U.", that he may take the necessary steps. The case is to be held and sent to the Archives, leaving it in charge of the 2nd Section of the Secret Department of the "G.P.U."

Note.—The arrested are kept under guard in the prison car No. 4030 and under escort of the Kharkoff Provincial Department of the Ukrainian "G. P. U."

Assistant Chief of the 2nd Section of the Secret Dept. of the "G. P. U." SHIMANKEVITCH.

Agreed:
Andreeva
Samsonoff
Unschlicht

Copy correct: Secreetary of the 2nd Section of the Secret Depart. of the G. P. U.

(Signature)

(Seal)

A VOICE FROM THE WILDERNESS*
(1923)

The first period of my exile I spent in a dark country where there were no people except myself, eight exiled priests and the "au-

*This letter, somewhat abbreviated here, was written by Olga Romanova, a girl 18 years of age, to A. A. Karelin, the well-known revolutionist. Romanova was exiled to the uninhabited parts of the Narym territory in Siberia.

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thorities." It took us only a month by rowboat to get there, a distance of 900 versts, along the Parabel and Kenghe rivers, besides some "hiking" across marshland.

It was so dead and human beings were so rare in those parts that even the birds did not fear us. Frequently wild fowl, such as heath-cocks and woodhens, would sit on the roof of the cabin in which the priests and I lived, and wild geese would swim in the stream under the window without fear and without stirring at our approch. Even the field mice and the beavers, of whom there were great swarms, did not fear the presence of man and played freely about the cabin. At night one could often hear the desperate cries of the "holy fathers" whenever the brave little mice caught at their long hair during their innocent sleep. . . .

What did we do there? I say "we," because I want to tell you a little about the priests. Nothing. There was nothing to occupy us. No books, no newspapers, no paper, no people with whom one could talk in a human fashion. It was absolutely impossible to busy oneself studying the locality and nature generally. First of all, because there are not even paths, let alone roads, in this wild country. It is true there was one little path of about seven versts, so bad that it was almost impossible to follow it, being a stranger, without breaking one's neck or at least a leg. It has so many stumps and roots that after the first attempt one loses all desire to repeat it. one wants to leave the path and walk under the magnificent cedars, but this must remain a wish because it is impossible to walk even three feet off the path. The underbrush is in the way. What a pity! But if you try to overcome the obstacles you risk losing an eye and return with bleeding hands and face, clothes torn to shreds.

In addition to all this there is another awful nuisance which prevents the enjoyment of nature. In the whole Narym territory there is such a multitude of mosquitoes and insects that some days it is impossible to go even outside the cabin without nets. (Narym, translated into Russian, means "swamp".) There are some impassable swamps stretching for distances from 70 to 80 versts, and even the native Ostiaks, accustomed to the *taiga* and the marshes, are unable to cross them. Yet the Ostiaks, of whom there are many along the rivers of Parabel, Kenghe, Chuzyk, Wassyugan, are really so accustomed to the *taiga* that they safely walk 40 or 50 versts a day across swamps and thickets. But of course they are dressed in leather clothes, in high boots, and are equipped with firearms to protect themselves against beasts, as well as with a *palitza* (resembling a scythe), with sharp steel ends, for the purpose of cutting their way through the thickets and underbrush.

There goes an Ostiak over the *taiga*, waving his *palitza* to the right and to the left, clearing his path, and when he comes to a

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swamp or an overgrown pond he skillfully, without hesitation, begins to jump from one hillock to the other.

The Holy Fathers

Now, about the "holy fathers". Whenever I recall them I want to laugh. First, about things serious. Upon our arrival there, at the Upper Kenghe, the "fathers" busied themselves thrashing the grain left by a colony of "sectarians" who had lived there before our arrival and disappeared as soon as the authorities discovered them. The priests labored threshing the grain with flails, toiling so that the sweat streamed down their bodies, the wind swept their long hair and spread wide the skirts of their priestly garments. They would toil hard; the work, however, moved forward very slowly. Tired, exhausted, the poor souls, needing a rest, would enter the cabin to strengthen themselves with the meager dinner and some clear "tea"—boiling water. I would put before them whatever God gave. Being the only woman among them, I baked bread for all and cooked dinner whenever there were any potatoes or peas. Sometimes, on account of the lack of provisions, the meal consisted of bread and hot water. The priests always took turns boiling the water. In the absence of a samovar, we used a kettle over a fire made outside the cabin, and even in the autumn, when the rain drizzled from morning to evening, we had to boil the water in this way. The priests would exert themselves to the utmost to fan the fire, standing around it and protecting it from the wind with the skirts of their ragged garments, torn during the walk in the *taiga*. After standing for an hour or more in the wind and rain, numb and wet, the unfortunate men would drag their legs, covered with gaping boots, through the mud and water and enter the cabin to warm themselves with some "tea." In spite of my desire to help with the boiling of the water, the "fathers" never allowed me to get near the fire, insisting that I remain in the hut. The poor souls were afraid that if I should take cold and become ill they would be left without bread, since there was no one else to do the baking.

Loneliness

Incidentally, I may add, that on account of this baking I even now suffer from a dislocated right arm. (The arm was injured previously, during the journey, when all of us had to draw a boat by rope, carrying our baggage on us. It was then that I tripped over a log and fell and my arm was injured. One "holy father," wishing to place the bone back in its place, pulled my poor hand so hard that my eyes nearly popped out. However, he not only failed to straighten it out, but dislocated it even more. For a couple of months it did not bother me. Then came the bread-baking, and now I cannot

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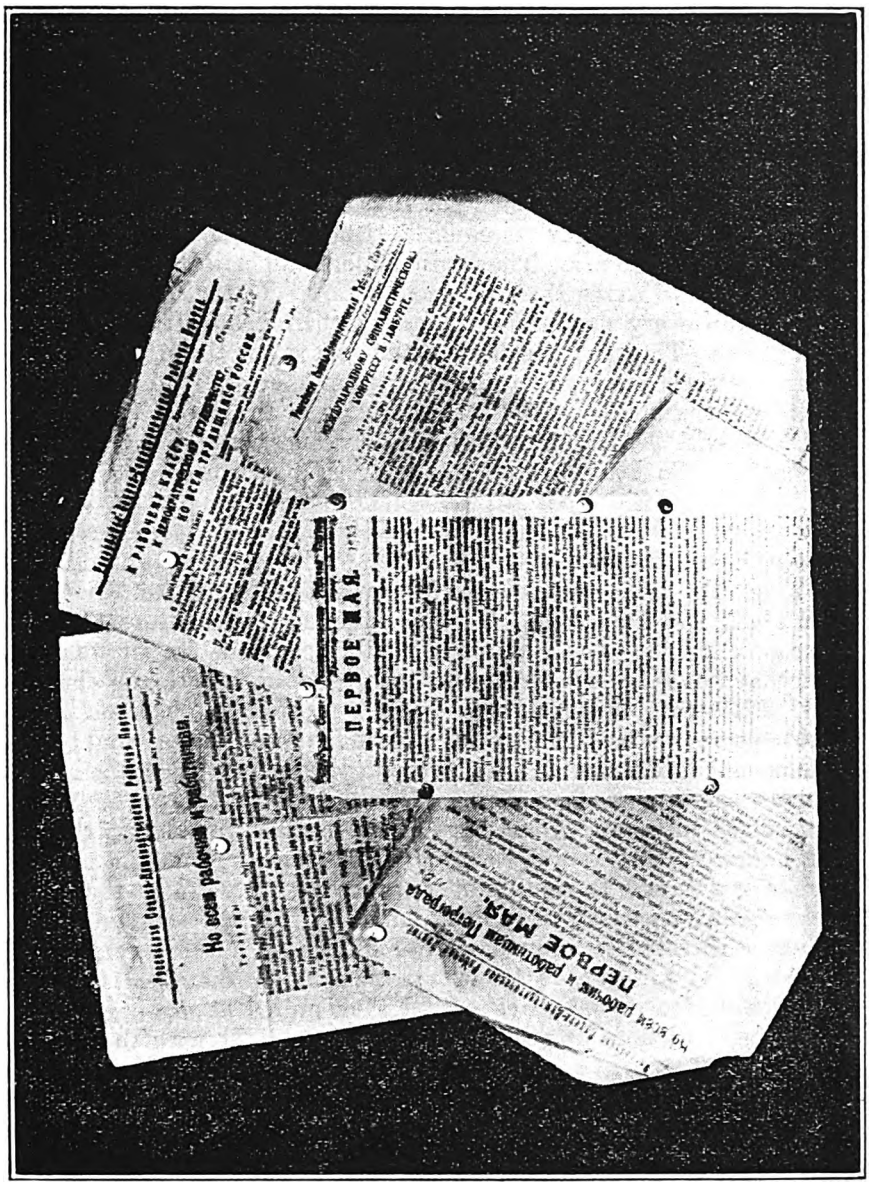
lift anything heavy, and when I turn it a bit the wrong way it pains frightfully. Well, all this is rubbish, I have digressed too much. . . .)

I lived in the wilderness for four months, true, including the time spent going there. As I said, I had nothing to do except to bake bread. When I was free I wandered like a shadow around the



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ILLEGAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY PUBLICATIONS IN RUSSIA

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cabin, sometimes following the path for a long distance, risking a broken leg too. Cautiously I would make my way. Then I would begin to think, and sitting on a tree-trunk I would think, think, think. And they were all alarming thoughts, not happy thoughts, arousing me more and more. I would sit for an hour, for two, sometimes longer, and then, waking up, I would still be under the infleuence of the thoughts and recollections of my former life. I questioned myself: "Where am I? Why am I here? Whence these century-old cedars?" That would last but a moment. Then I would shake it all off and recover my consciousness and realize fully what, where, and why. Then a burning yearning would creep again into my heart, a yearning for freedom, for life, for people. I would want to cry out: "I desire liberty, freedom!" But to whom could I cry out? Not to the aged cedars. They will understand nothing; but slowly, slowly, they will shake their heads as before. To the birds, mice and beavers who every now and then raised their heads from under the tree-trunks? They too will understand and say nothing, but in reply to my cry their eyes will glitter and then they will hide under the trunk, and the birds will fly off. Perhaps to the green frogs? But they, too, will be frightened by my cry and clumsily hop off into hiding. . . . So I would remain sitting in a petrified condition, my hands clenched in despair till my fingers cracked. I would sit, and all around me was life, the sun would shine brightly and call gloriously, luring and promising a better life; the birds would flutter and sing; the mice would bravely run between my feet, and with their black and glistening little eyes stare at the creature they had never seen before. The mosquitoes would buzz and bite (it was these bites that finally would drive me away and back into the cheerless hut). All around was life, and I?—I? I could but look on.... I would return to the hut towards evening. The priests would be at vespers or night-mass. I would rest a little, and then their exasperating singing would get on my nerves. I would run out of the hut and go off in any direction. Their services would last three or four hours. Night would come, and the singing from the hut still reached my ears. I would not want to return. Later the nights became cold, especially in the autumn. I froze, having no warm clothes, I shivered, my teeth chattered. Finally, the service would end, all going to sleep. I too would turn in for the night. But the mice would give me no peace; either they pulled at my hair or they bit my feet or hands. One had to wake up to fight with them. And in the other half of the cabin, where the "holy fathers" were at rest, one heard the sound: "Sh . . . sh . . . sh . . ." It was the priests driving the mice away. Or suddenly, right after falling asleep, an inhuman cry would reach me from the other side. Some playful mouse must have become entangled in the locks of one of the priests, or bitten his hand or a foot. Brave little mice! They recognize

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nothing. They do not even fear hell in the other world for injuring "holy fathers."

The Return Trip

After living there four months I was sent back on foot, accompanied by an Ostiak guide. It was impossible to return by rowboat—the stream had become too shallow. And so I walked two days through the *taiga* and the swamps, a distance of 60 versts. Of course, there was no path. I followed the Ostiak, who was clearing a passage. In the marshland I jumped from one hillock to another. It was cold. In the autumn the water is already like ice in the swamps. We reached a lake choked with vegetation. The Ostiak skillfully jumped over the hillocks, I following in his footsteps. Suddenly I missed my step and fell into the water, or rather into the thick vegetation filling the lake. I began to cry. The Ostiak returned and pulled me out. (Laughter.) We continued through the "oorman" (the Ostiak name for the dense *taiga*). Two days later we reached a deserted cabin, spent the night there, and continued on our way but now along a path. The rest of the trip was made partly on foot, partly on horseback, partly by rowboat, until we reached Parabel, in the vicinity of which I am making at present my uncertain habitation.

1923. OLGA ROMANOVA.

ON VACATION IN NARYM*
(1924)

The Narym exiles are so firmly isolated from the rest of the world that only letters dealing with the health of relatives or our own health can hope to reach their destination. Any other messages, even complaints against the lawlessness and cruelty of our officials, addressed by us to the higher authorities, do not arrive. A telegram sent by us to Peshkova of the "Red Cross" remained on file in one of the local offices.

And yet the condition of the exiles and the system of exile are such that at times one becomes terrified by this dreadful isolation. . . . The local authorities, the Soviet and "G. P. U." are treating us as common criminals having no rights at all. They told us so and are acting accordingly. To all our protests that we were not condemned by a court, that we were socialists in exile, there is one answer: "We know that you are condemned criminals, that you have lost all your rights." And whenever any of us are convoyed to some village or outlying cabin the accompanying paper to the local authorities reads, "administrative exiles so-and-so," and then follow the names of a

*This letter from a socialist exile in the Narym territory, written early in 1924, appeared in the "Socialist Vestnik," the central organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, for April 17, 1924, published in Berlin.

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social-democrat and of a thief, with a long prison-record, coupled together.

But the peasants very quickly drew the line between the "politicals" and the others, and to the honor of the exile it must be added that the prestige of the former is very high in Narym, which cannot be said of the reputation of the communists.

After all the suffering in the "G. P. U.," on the prison route and in the various jails, for we were assembled from all parts of Russia in Moscow first and from there sent to Siberia, we waited with impatience for Narym itself—its spaciousness and peace.

We had spent much time in different "G. P. U." prisons, in damp cells, never breathing the open air, forbidden to see our relatives, deprived of the right of correspondence, the windows of our cells always closed under orders. Many of us had passed through the "Inner Prison" of the "G. P. U.," in which all examinations, receipt of packages, transfers from cells, visiting the bathhouse, all that takes place at night only. We had been through the filthy and crowded association with common criminals on the route, suffering from bugs, lice, the absence of bunks, traveling in packed prison cars, frequently stopping at provincial prisons, and having endless encounters with squads of "G. P. U." guards coming from the opposite direction who never fail to indulge in the sport of clicking the musket triggers just for the sake of terrorization.

All of that wore the nerves of the healthy prisoners out and knocked off their feet the weak ones. We had cases of tuberculosis and heart disease among us. Towards the end only three to five comrades from among the party of 25 were capable of carrying their own luggage. Is it any wonder that we waited for Narym as for a promised land? We thought we would remain settled and begin studying. . . .

At first we were left in Kolpashovo, in accordance with the pledge of the authorities in Tomsk. To characterize our life here and the Tomsk "G. P. U." it must be said that we obtained this pledge only after our refusal to start out from prison to our destination. An attempt was made to cow us by the special detachment clicking the triggers of the guns, but we did not budge and the result was a promise to leave us in Kolpashovo.

We began to arrange things, found living quarters, organized a common kitchen, and after resting commenced to study. Some of us secured poorly paid positions. We were cheerful and began to recover, thanks to the fresh air, the bathing in the Ob, and the "freedom." But this "well being" of ours was the main cause of the first attack inspired from Tomsk. The reasons were not even concealed from us. "You live here as if you were on a vacation!" the authorities, unashamed, told us. Some of us were then picked out to be sent to such points which were not even on the map in the old days of the

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Narym exile, localities infested with malaria, populated by foreign tribes, and far removed from a post office.

Especially cruel was the treatment accorded to Olga Romanova, 18 years old, who was exiled to the upper region of the Kenghe River, where she was fed for three months on bread and hot water. I say "fed," because on the Upper Kenghe there are no free settlements, but a "concentration camp" organized on the initiative of the Tomsk authorities, whch differs from the others only in so far that its inmates are tortured by starvation. Some priests, some common criminals, several peasants and the anarchist, Romanova, were exiled there. . . .

Romanova left the place, and on the way was caught in the first winter cold and had frostbitten feet. She arrived in her summer clothes in the village of Parabel, where our comrades took her in.

The exiles receive none of their allowances. During the entire period of six months several comrades received from 1 to 2 roubles, including cash, flour and millet. We began to look for work. It was not difficult to find it, as in the whole region there is an enormous demand for educational resources. We occupied a number of positions in the government service, in the educational field, but the Soviet and local party committee, composed of total ignoramuses, under the leadership of the semi-literate chairman of the Soviet, commenced a campaign against us. . . .

Suddenly on November 1 a new misfortune, altogether unexpected, descended upon us. The local Soviet took advantage of the refusal of three of our comrades to participate in the show organized by the educational department and selected for exile six of our comrades, including two who had children.

The cold was 35 degrees below zero. They had no traveling clothes. Sollertinsky and Pobstanitzky left for their destination. The others remained, and we declared through our representatives that they should not leave. There were some very stormy conversations. The authorities seemingly gave in. It is true, no answer was made to our application. We spent several weeks in a nervous condition, and then calmed ourselves. All that time the authorities were not asleep, special couriers of the "G. P. U" were sent to Tomsk, the chairman of the Soviet went there to get "moral" backing. We, on our part, at the very beginning of the conflict, telegraphed to Moscow, to the Procurator of the Republic and the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union. We received no replies, but apparently the events which followed were the answer.

On December 15 all the Kolpashovo exiles received an order to leave within three days. The order did not affect the physician and the two women among us, as well as the clericals. The new points selected were all on the tributaries of the Ob, about 100 to 150 versts to the north of Kolpashovo. Without allowances, without clothes, we were permitted to carry not more than one pood (36 pounds) of lug-

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gage and compelled to walk. This time we decided to obey. In the twenties of December the exiles, leaving the huts which they had repaired, the common kitchen they had organized, began to leave in the atrocious Siberian cold, dressed in short furt-coats and some even without that. The one-year-old son of Tcherkess was in the party. . . .

Generally, the membership of present-day "exiledom" is heterogeneous. There are old party members who had done penal servitude under the Czar, such as Shtulmann. There are young women, such as Fanja Lissina, a worker of the Kostroma factories. There is the working woman Anna Yefimova, who for more than three months was on the prison route going into exile, detained at every county jail on the way, and carrying with her all the time her little girl. . . .

Narym, 1924. (Signature) N.

THE ROAD TO EXILE
(1922)

I was arrested in Kharkov at the beginning of 1921 as an anarchist. I was soon transferred as the result of a hunger-strike to the Butyrki Prison in Moscow.

In September, 1921, I was notified that on July 30th I had been sentenced in my absence, as a "Makhno"† Anarchist, to banishment for one year to Ust-Syssolsk, in the province of the Northern Dvina.

I was ill. The medical officer diagnosed inflammation of the joints, admitted my critical state and categorically forbade departure. My feet were badly swollen and I could barely move. Yet I decided to set out; prison life was much too unbearable.

I asked that my place of exile be changed because of my illness and of lack of clothes; I indicated my desire to be sent to the South, that I could not go north. The reply came: immediate dispatch to the North.

At the station I found a whole caravan of prisoners—64 in all. Among them were many peasants—from the Tambov province mainly—who were banished for the "Antonov rebellion." Men, women and children even of the age of 8. A fair sprinkling of old men and women of 60 and over.

The food, on the way, was repulsive. We were taken, upon our arrival at Vologda,* to the temporary detention prison. Afoot, in complete darkness, in frightfully muddy streets, we dragged along in the middle of the road. Besides, the escort would compel us pur-

†Makhno was the leader of a popular armed uprising in the Ukraine in 1919-1920.

*See Fleshin affidavit on page 177 corroborating this as to prison conditions in Vologda.

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posely to walk in the muddiest part of the street. They abused us—these blind, unbalanced and embittered soldiers.

There was an old woman who could not keep up with us; she fell right into the mud. Instead of helping her get up, one of the escort threw himself upon her, swearing all the while:

"Get up, you . . . ! No use your spreading yourself out. It was worse under Nicolas, and yet you walked then. . . ."

The old woman lay motionless. The soldier jabbed her with the butt-end of his rifle. The woman screamed, then began to whimper.

I could not bear it any longer and protested indignantly.

"Will you go on or not?" the escort shouted at me. "Do you intend moving on?".... Insults and gun threats.

"But I will speak out, how dare you?"

The soldier took aim at me.

"I will shoot you on the spot. . . . Will you walk on or not?"

At this moment I slipped and fell into the the sticky, stinking mud.

The old woman raised herself with great difficulty. I, too, stood up. The soldier still threatened to shoot, continuing to swear furiously.

A Provincial Prison

The prison was reached late at night. The "authorities" met us from the very first minute with the most foul outburst of oaths.

"Stand here! How dare you? Don't move! Shut up."

I approached the door of the common female cell where I was sent. I gasped. No words could transmit the incredible horror of the thing: in an almost dark room, amidst a filthy heap of mud, swarmed about 35 to 40 creatures, half alive. Even the walls of the cells were covered with excrement and other filth. . . .

I asked the wardress to call one of the higher officials. I wanted to speak about the beating that took place on the way to the prison and about the cell. The wardress, a rather kind woman, advised me not to attempt to speak to anybody about anything, as "the chief of the prison was no better than the escort."

It was impossible to sit anywhere in the cell. The floor did not seem to have been washed for years.

I refused categorically to remain in the cesspool and asked whether I could not spend the night in the corridor, which was, after all, cleaner. The same request was formulated by a woman doctor who was being exiled for some reason unknown to me and who had to stay in that same cell.

The wardress proposed that we occupy, instead of the corridor, a small cell used for solitary confinement. But this cell was found to be taken by a woman eaten up by venereal disease and fever; besides, she was weak-minded. It was decided that this woman

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would be put in the corridor for the night, on condition that she should be transferred the next morning to the hospital. This was done.

Still, we did not like that cell, which was even dirtier than the common cell; all its walls were covered with excrement. For a healthy person to cross the threshold of this cell was nothing less than torture.

We asked for hot water, so as to wash the floor and walls. The wardress told us that she would give it to us as soon as the chief would be gone. He went away at last; we obtained hot water, washed that cell and prepared for the night.

Before leaving, the wardress warned us to be on our guard; the inspector, or even the chief, might come late at night for a certain purpose. Such is the "custom." Almost all the women who pass through this prison are abused that way. In addition, almost all the officials are diseased and infect the women. "Any woman who is here for a certain period of time leaves it diseased."

The warning was not superfluous. During the night a man with a lamp came into our cell.

"Who is there?"

"Never mind. . . . I have come for the control," was the reply.

We jumped up together. There were four of us: myself, the woman doctor, a Lettish woman and one other woman, a would-be socialist-revolutionist (it was afterwards found out that she was planted as an *agent-provocateur*). The visitor saw, no doubt, that this time his call was futile. He examined us, stamped his feet and left.

When morning came he appeared again and — doubtless as revenge—ordered: "Clean the lavatories."

We refused. He threatened "to take measures." We still refused to go.

During the day—another nightmare: the meals. The food consists exclusively of half-rotten dried fish. We don't get the gruel; it is appropriated by the officials. Owing to the fact that the Vologda prison is a "central" prison and that ceaseless waves of exiles pass through it on the way to all the four corners of the country, there is here an incredible come and go, and no one takes any notice of the kitchen. The dishes are never washed. Fifty per cent. of the food is filth. In the pots in which the dirty liquid called "soup" is prepared, worms in horrifying numbers swarm.

The following night another individual appeared in our cell. He came in without a light.

"What is the matter?" we asked, and again jumped up together. The man lit a candle, examined us and mumbled between the teeth: "I have come for the control."

We protested energetically and shouted:

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"After the evening inspection you have no right to come into our cell. . . . Get out."

The man left. We did not know who he was. We learned the next day that it was the Assistant Chief of the Vologda Prison.

Four days later I was sent to Vyatka* . . . . The conditions here seemed to be slightly better than in Vologda, the cells larger and not so filthy.

There were 40 women in the large female cell. I was the only "political". There are nine folding boards in the cell. No mattresses, no pillows, nothing. These boards and the floor itself were covered with tattered, and in some cases, almost naked, semi-corpses. . . .

I cannot remember a more terrible night than the one I spent in the Vyatka Prison. Myriads of insects. The women prisoners tossed, moaned, begged for water. Most of them had fever.

When morning came it was found that 17 women suffered from irruptive fever. We demanded their transfer to the hospital. No answer. I asked for the Chief. Refusal. I went myself to the hospital. All the 17 sick women followed me; 14 at least, were accepted. These returned to their cell, as there was no more room in the hospital.

I asked why no hot water is distributed.

"Wood is so expensive"

At 8 in the morning three-quarters of a pound of bread is given. It is some kind of mixture of dirty, raw paste with putrid potatoes. The mixture is so liquid that it has to be eaten with a spoon. I asked what else does one get. "*Sometimes*, at 8 p. m., soup." And that is all.

"Any outdoor walks?"

"No, never."

The "soup" was brought at 8 p. m. I have never seen anything like it. It was cooked with dirty horse-heads, bits of horse-skin floated in the dark, stinking liquid, as well as hair—a kind of mucus. . . . The potatoes in the soup were unpeeled.

The women threw themselves with a bestial avidity on this repulsive mixture, fighting over the potato peelings.

A few minutes later many vomited their food.

I decided to send a statement to Chief of the Prison about all I had seen. There were a few women "intellectuals" in the cell (in connection with some railway plot), who helped me in that. We wrote out that statement on the second morning and demanded that a delegation from our cell be received.

Official Action

To my surprise, the Chief received our delegation. He was very kind to us. He has a beautifully furnished office. He impressed me

*For corroboration of statement as to Vyatka Prison see page 99.

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as a typical general of the Nicolas period: military correctness and, for some reason, wearing his cap on the side.

'What is the matter?"

He read the statement and was himself horrified. "It is terrible, it is intolerable."

"Don't you know all these things?"

"I did not know that they reached such a state. I knew that hot water was not often distributed. But the town itself is short of it, too. No wood. . . ."

"You understand that such prison conditions are also dangerous for the whole town. . . . It is a seat of infection."

"Yes, yes, of course.... Don't worry; everything will be attended to. . . . I will call the doctors. . . . I will take measures. . . ."

One of the demands in our statement was that an immediate disinfection be carried out. He promised to see to it.

As a matter of fact, a medical examination came post haste to the prison the very same evening: doctors, medical assistants, sanitary assistants. . . .

They started to disinfect the cell. It was done quite primitively. Everybody was packed off to another cell, with all the belongings and the whole filth in them. The empty cell was "disinfected," and we then returned to it.

Two days after "disinfection" everything returned to the old state: the same filth, the same horror.

I had almost forgotten: once we had a bath.

I spent a month in the Vyatka prison. It seemed to me a year. To think that there are human beings who spend three to five years here for petty criminal offenses or for "misdemeanors in office. . . ." Besides, I was under better conditions than others; I was selling odd pieces of clothing (through prisoners who were going to town), thus having something to feed on and to keep up one's strength.

I spent such a long time in the Vyatka prison because it was expected that my banishment to Ust-Syssolsk would be revoked. Nothing but a miracle would have enabled me to bear the trip, considering the state of my health. It was a railway journey to Kotlass; but from that point to Ust-Syssolsk meant 50 versts on foot under terrible conditions. I was barely able to walk and would have certainly succumbed on the way. The doctor and the prison authorities were of the same opinion. I was waiting for the final decision.

By the end of the month it was discovered that the order of the central authorities could not be revoked.

When I reached Kotlass I was sent to the local militia. . . .

The Chief of the Kotlass militia frankly declared that he did not see how I could be sent off to Ust-Syssolsk; they had no extra militia-men to accompany me. Meanwhile, he gave orders that I should be admitted to the local prison.

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From Kotlass to Ust-Syssolsk

The distance between Kotlass and the next stopping place, the name of which escapes me, is 17 versts. This is not much, but in my state of health it was torture. I had to carry my own belongings; yet I was so weak that I was unable to carry myself. At each step I stumbled and refused to continue the journey. But it was impossible to send me back to Kotlass or leave me somewhere on the road; we had but few militia-men with us. Besides, there was no revoking of the order.

Some of the men in the party had their belongings on carts. But I did not possess enough money to allow myself this luxury. At last, one of the drivers took pity on me, carried my things and then placed me on the cart for my last 5000 rubles.

We stayed the night in the prison of that place (17 versts from Kotlass), received on the morrow food for 10 days, and marched off again.

We reached Yarensk. I could not walk any more, and insisted upon being given a conveyance. In one of the villages one of the native Zyrians who traveled with us denounced me to the local authorities, reporting that I interfered purposely with the march, that I was an anarchist and was making propaganda against the State, etc. The Chief of the local prison called me. After explanations he appointed a commission to examine me. The commission found that it was imperative that I should be given means to travel the remaining distance.

The last stop finally. After two more days of tribulations in villages we reached Ust-Syssolsk on the morning of the third day.

I was, first of all, brought to the local militia. I was told here that they could not accommodate me and that they did not know what to do with me. They sent me to the district militia. Here again they declared: "It has nothing to do with us." I was then dispatched to the local "Communist Party": let them decide my fate.

At the "Communist Party" I was told: "We do not deal with these matters; it does not concern us."

I was sent to the local prison. It was 3 p. m. I had had nothing to eat since morning and I had to carry all the time my belongings while barely able to stand on my feet.

I was refused admission to the prison; they declared there that, in accordance with the documents of my case, I was now no more a prisoner but an exile, and that the prison had nothing to do with it.

We went to the "revolutionary tribunal." An official who had served under the old regime replied: "Nothing doing. Go to the provincial militia."

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I returned to the provincial militia. . . . The chief said he would call a meeting and would give the answer in an hour. An hour later the decision was taken: to be sent to . . . to *Tcheka*. . . .

It was 5 p. m.

At the *Tcheka* I was first searched and my belongings were going to be taken away from me. I protested that I was an exile and not a prisoner.

I was sent to sentry-room. Full of soldiers. Filth everywhere. Disorder. Savagery. Soldiers swearing at the authorities. . . .

After a few hours' waiting I was called out. But I could not walk, and dropped. A soldier helped me and carried my things.

A *tchekist* overtook us: "Here! Just fill in this questionnaire and go back to the kitchen and wait there. . . ."

"No! I shall not go. I have been exiled here and do not intend to drag about in sentry-rooms. . . . You will have to carry me there. . . ."

I asked for the president. He was called. . . .

"What is the matter?"

"There, this woman; she is making trouble," reports the *tchekist*.

"I have no time," interrupts the president, "I must hurry to a meeting. . . ."

Then I raised my voice:

"Yes, you have meetings, business. . . . You have a lodging. . . . . I have nothing, and nowhere to go to. . . ."

"Let her sleep here, in the room where the safe is," the president decided.

I went into that room. Near the safe—an immovable dumb soldier. A militia-man placed at the door. A cot is found. I shall at least spend a quiet night.

Next morning I was summoned by the president of the *Tcheka*.

"You are a Makhno follower?"

"You are a Jewess?"

"What of it?" I asked indignantly.

After some squabble I demanded point blank:

"Will you release me?"

"Yes, but I will send you to work. You are going to be in the hands of the "obkomtrood" (District Committee of Compulsory Labor).

"If it is along the lines of my profession I will go. I am a midwife."

"Very well. . . . And now you can go wherever you like. . . ."

G. M. YUDEVITCH.

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A BOLSHEVIST CELEBRATION*
(April 1923)

On March 14, the day of the 25th anniversary of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, the socialist political exiles serving their terms in Orenburg met at the house of one of their comrades for the purpose of celebrating that historic event. In spite of the intimate comradely character of the celebration, all the participants, 23 people, were arrested and taken to the cellar under the headquarters of the Orenburg "G. P. U." In the act drawn up at the arrest it was stated that nothing illegal was found during the search and that in accordance with the declaration of the arrested persons they all gathered in order to spend an intimate evening on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Russian Socialist-Democratic Party.

The prisoners were kept in the cellar seven days without any examination and without any charge being made against them. They were then informed that, at the order of the Orenburg "G. P. U.," they were to be exiled from the city of Orenburg to various points in the Kirghiz territory. The demand to produce any charge or to indicate the basis for such a repressive measure was met with a refusal. At the end of the seventh day all the prisoners were set free upon a pledge of mutual security given by all the prisoners that they would appear on a certain date at the headquarters of the "G. P. U." Ten of the comrades were informed of their exile into the province of Aktiubinsk, and they had to pledge themselves to deliver their luggage at headquarters by Saturday, March 31, and to assemble there at 6 o'clock in the morning on Sunday, April 1, before starting for Aktiubinsk.

**During the night of March 31 to April 1 the exiles began to gather at the house of one of them living nearest to the "G. P. U.," so that the whole group of ten could go together to headquarters in the morning. A number of other exiles, socialists as well as non-partisans, called singly at the house to bid us farewell. At 2 o'clock in the night agents of the "G. P. U." arrived without an order and declared us arrested. In reply to our persistent demand for an order, such a document was brought an hour and a half later. About 3 o'clock, at the moment the prisoners were to be taken to the "G.

*March 14, 1923, Soviet Russia was celebrating with much pomp the 25th anniversary of the Bolshevist Party, which was formally announced to date from the foundation of the Russian Social-Democratic Party in 1898. However, at that time there were no Bolsheviks and Mensheviks yet, since the split into these two factions occurred only in 1903. The Mensheviks therefore accused the Bolsheviks of usurping their date, and secretly celebrated the anniversary as their own. The Orenburg Social-Democrats, as this letter shows, paid dearly for it.

**See also questionnaire of Y. Zubelevitch pages 50-51-52 for account of this rencontre and conditions at Orenberg in general.

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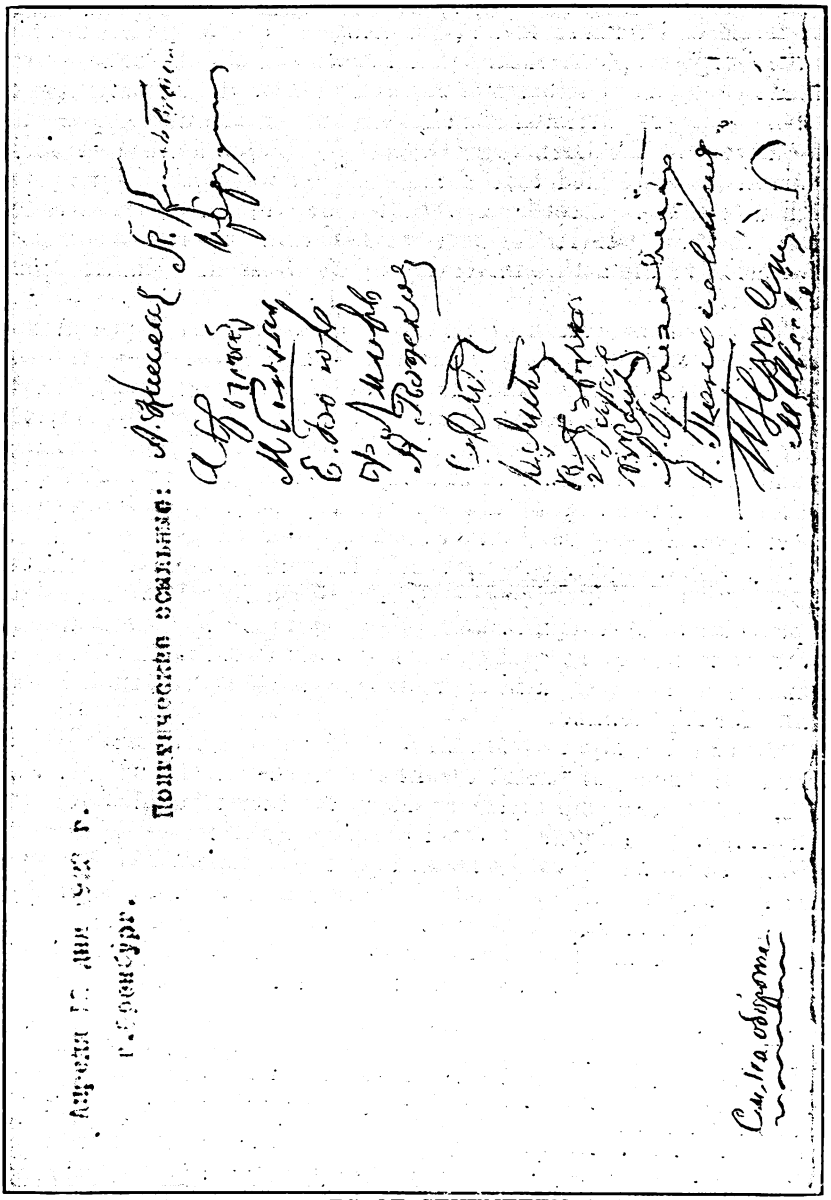
P. U.," three more exiles called at the house, two of them of the departing group. Towards four in the morning we were all brought to the headquarters of the "G. P. U." and for about two hours were kept outside the building in the street. Our repeated insistent de-



FACSIMILE OF SIGNATURES OF SEVENTEEN (17) POLITICALS IN ORENBURG EXILE, BELONGING TO DOCUMENT UNDER THE HEADING OF "A BOLSHEVIST CELEBRATION".

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mands to be taken inside the building were refused by the commandant. Our additional demands, that one of the higher officials of the "G. P. U." be called out were also refused. Instead, a military detachment of about 40 men suddenly appeared. The soldiers, with their bayonets fixed, surrounded us. The comrades of the departing group were called out by name and separated from the rest. The agent of the Orenburg "G. P. U.," Uglov, came out and proposed that the departing group enter the building and those who came to see them off go into the cellar. When requested to call out one of the higher officials, he sharply replied that he did not want to talk with us. Then the commandant fell with shouts upon an exile nearest to him, Dr. Verchovsky, and, seizing his throat with one hand and his face with the other, began to drag him into the court. Following the example of the commandant, the soldiers and several agents threw themselves upon us. They used bayonets, butts of rifles, and their fists. In reality, offering no resistance, we were pushed into the court, some of us suffering brutal violence.

Indignant over the complete senselessness of the arrest itself, as well as over all that followed, we immediately sent a statement to the plenipotentiary representatives of the "G. P. U." for the Kirghiz Republic, dispatching a copy to the Prosecutor of the Kirghiz Republic, demanding the immediate release of the arrested exiles and an inquiry into the entire incident. We declared a hunger-strike. The inquiry was intrusted to one of the culprits of the incident, Uglov. The inquiry was stopped on the third day of the hunger-strike and we were set free by the representative of the Kirghiz "G. P. U.," who announced our exile to "dark corners" of Kirghiz territory. Fourteen of us had to appear on Saturday, April 14, with our luggage at headquarters to proceed first to Aktiubinsk and later into the depths of the Kirghiz Republic.

In all of this we see: 1st, an attempt on the part of the local authorities to deprive us of the right of elementary comradely association which had been sanctioned by decades of Russian political exile and recognized even in the worst times of Czarism; and, proof of the uncompromising attitude of the government towards the development of the socialist movement, and of its warfare against any manifestation of independent socialist thought in Russia; 2nd, it is an act of the most brutal violence on the part of the provincial administration to send us to certain perdition into the depths of the Kirghiz steppes without trial and inquiry.

In the name of our elementary rights as human beings, as citizens, and as socialists, we protest in the most decisive manner against the moral and physical violence perpetrated on us.

We demand:

1. An unbiased investigation through a special commissioner, of all the events of March 14, and of the morning of April 1.

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2. An examination of all those who were sent out, arrested or suffered violence on the morning of April 1, and the open trial of those responsible.

3. The suspension of our exile from Orenburg and of our ten comrades from Aktiubinsk until the conclusion of the inquiry.

4. The stoppage of exile to places lacking the elementary conditions of settled civilized life and remote from railroads, as well as the stoppage of exile of sick and feeble persons without a preliminary examination by a medical commission.

5. The immediate issuance of the proper orders urgently by telegraph.

Orenburg, April 12, 1923. Political Exiles:
(Signatures)

A. KAPLAN, R. BOGORAD, M. BOGORAD, I. BOGORAD, F. LYSSOV, A. ROZHKOV, S. DEITCH, D. LIBEROVA, V. BESRUTCHKO, I. MACHAEV, V. KAPLAN, L. GRANOVSKY, K. PONOTCHEVNAYA, G. VERCHOWSKY, M. SHEYENSON, P. KOLOBUSHKIN, J. FRUMIN.

IN THE KIRGHIZ STEPPES*

(April 14, 1923)

We, the undersigned political exiles in the Aktiubinsk province, demand that the responsible officials of the Orenburg, of the Kirghiz and the Aktiubinsk departments of the "G. P. U." be made liable before the law and handed over to justice for their openly lawless actions towards us.

We lived as political exiles in the city of Orenburg. On April 1 of this year the Orenburg and the Kirghiz departments of the "G. P. U." exiled us to the Aktiubinsk province. At the same time the local Orenburg "G. P. U." sent an order forbidding the seven social-st-democrats among us to hold positions in the government service. We declared our protest against this unlawful measure to the "G. P. U." of the Kirghiz Republic, which, agreeing that the order of the local "G. P. U." was unwarranted and unlawful, announced through the assistant chief Bartashevitch that this order had been annulled by it.

However, when we arrived in Aktiubinsk it appeared that the assurances of the Kirghiz "G. P. U." were but vicious lies and that the former order remained in force.

*The original text of the communication bears the inscription: "To the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union. Copies to the Procurator of the Republic and to the Presidium of the All-Russian "G. P. U."

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Three of us, socialist-revolutionists, were permitted to enter the service of the soviet and other establishments. But on account of the pressure exerted by the chief of the Aktiubinsk "G. P. U." on the various departments, the possibility of remaining in the service of the soviet and other public institutions was in reality eliminated.

Exclusion from public service is a violation of our civil rights. Political exiles are not deprived of these rights and are not limited in them, according to the law. The organs of the "G. P. U." have no right to establish such limitations. The resolutions to that effect of the Orenburg and Aktiubinsk "G. P. U." are nothing but acts of the most brutal administrative violence and a direct mockery of the fundamental laws of the Soviet Government itself.

All of us, ten persons, were exiled by a resolution of a special commission of the Commissariat of the Interior to the Orenburg province or the city of Orenburg. The Kirghiz and local "G. P. U." moved us to the Aktiubinsk province, viciously perverting the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Union according to which the right to pass sentences of exile and to fix the destination, and consequently to change this destination, is exclusively entrusted to a special commission of the Commissariat of the Interior and of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee.

The Aktiubinsk "G. P. U." has scattered us throughout the obscure corners of the Aktiubinsk province, such as the villages of Koss-Istek and Irghiz, lost in the Kirghiz steppe, about 150 versts from a railroad. Life in these places, after being deprived of the right of entering the public service, holds out to us a direct menace of death from starvation.

We resolutely protest against the brutal outrage of the Orenburg and Aktiubinsk authorities, against this savagery perpetrated upon socialist exiles, against the aim to exterminate us physically by putting us in impossible conditions of existence.

We demand the suspension of the order barring us from public service and our return to the city of Orenburg.

April 14, 1923. Political exiles:*

(Signatures)

M. MANDELSTAM, DUMKA, B. GUTERMANN, L. KINBER, S. POKROVSKY, B. LEVINSON, U. ZUBELEVITCH, U. BRAUDE, S. PERETZ.

*The tenth member of the group, a woman named A. Volkova, did not sign this communication, for some reason. She, however, shared the fate of the rest of her comrades.

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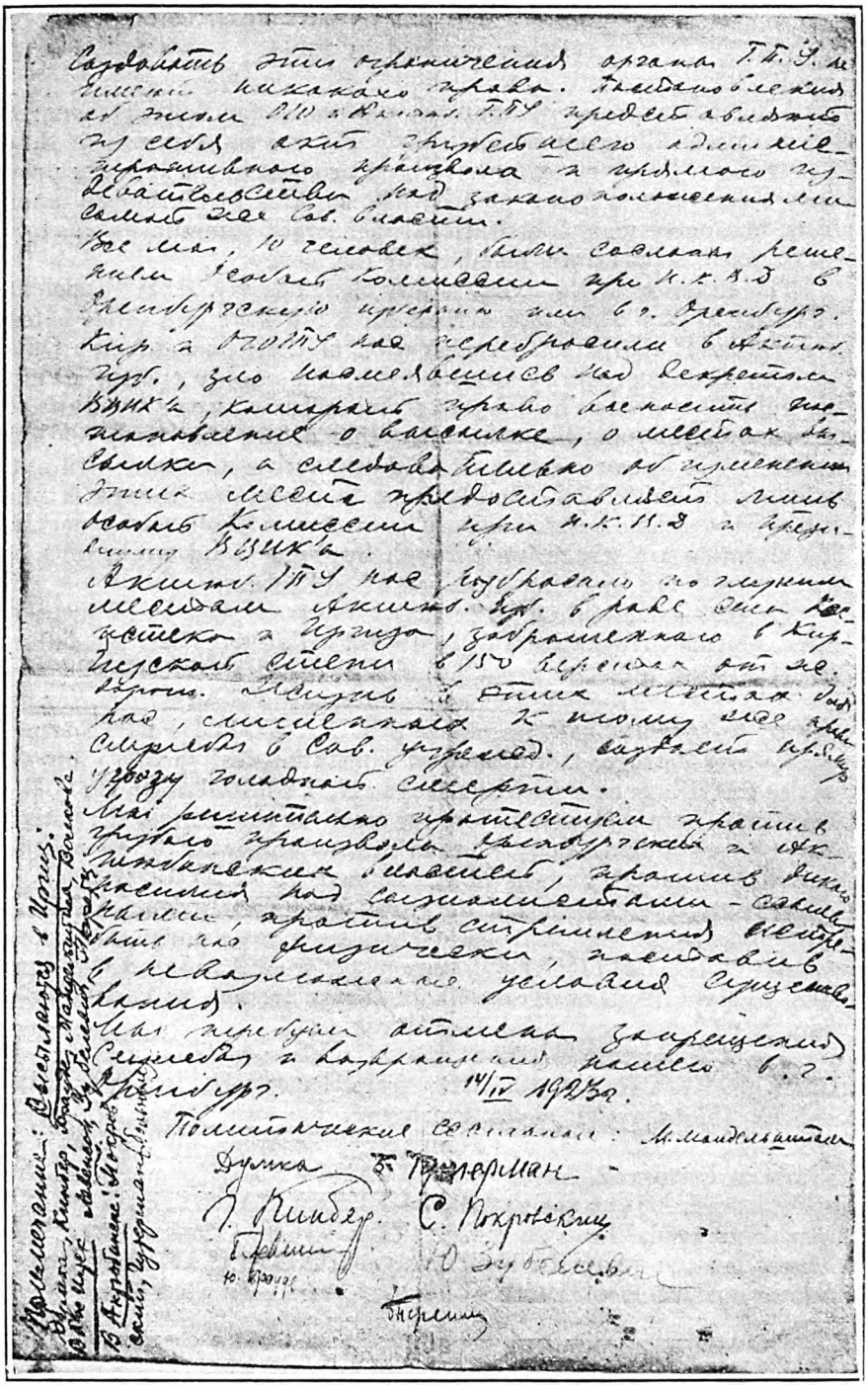

FACSIMILE OF LETTER ENTITLED "IN THE KHIRGIZ STEPPES

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POLITICAL EXILES IN ORENBURG*

(Letter received in 1924)

After a few years' interruption the places for political deportation are again filling up energetically. For the short period of three to four months over 60 exiles have been brought to the Kirghiz province. Everybody is here: Menshevists, socialist-revolutionists, anarchists, non-party men, constitutional democrats, communists, doctors, workingmen, cooperators, members of the clergy. . . .

The situation of the exiles is terrible. The "G. P. U." considers it its duty to keep every new arrival for a few days in a cellar before he is released; the personal registration at the Commandant's Office has been made compulsory twice a week; the subsidy (paltry 10 million rubles) is always held back; searches have become monthly occurrences; the letters disappear altogether or are kept back for long periods. The terror-stricken inhabitants refuse to allow exiles to be lodged in their flats. Employment in Soviet institutions is miserably paid and is accessible only to a few exiles, such as doctors. The majority are struggling through by doing hand work, toys, by sawing wood and by doing all kinds of odd jobs.

The critical situation is rendered worse by the banishment of many comrades from the cities to distant villages. Thus, the following have been banished from Orenburg: P. I. CHIRIEFF (Menshevist), from Petrograd, workman of a metallurgical factory, for one year to the Kriutchkoff farmhouse; I. A. KOTCHERGIN (non-party, from Petrograd, workman of a metallurgical factory) for one year to the village of Pretchistenskaya; N. YERMOLAYEV (S.-R.), cooperator from Petrograd, for one year to the village of Petrovskoye; he spent about three years in prisons under the Soviet regime; he suffers from tuberculosis of the throat; P. N. KOLOBUSHKIN (anarchist), from Petrograd, for three years to the village of Krasnokholmskoye; he had spent eight years hard labor under the Tzarist regime; G. S. DMITRIEFF (Anarchist), from Petrograd, for three years to the village of Krasnokholmskoye; he, too, had spent eight years hard labor under the Tzarist regime.

Are banished to cities of the Kirghiz province: In Uralsk: ABRAMOVITCH (Menshevist), from Petrograd, for two years; SAVIN (Menshevist), from Petrograd, for two years. In Semipalatinsk: SAMOYLOFF (Non-party), workman of the Shapshal factory in Petrograd, for one year; IVANOFF (Menshevist), teacher in Petrograd, for two years; MOSALEVSKY-ZARNITZYN (S.-R.), from Petrograd, for two years; TRAEGER (Menshevist), from Odessa, for one year. In Koktchetayeff: OSMANIAN (Anarchist), medical student from Moscow, for two years. In Orenburg: N. A.

*This document was sent out of Russia to the Mensheviks in Berlin, and is vouched for by them.

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ALEXANDROFF (ex-Communist); V. M. MARUSSIN (ex-Communist); V. I. DAULIN (ex-Communist); M. A. KORABLEFF (Non-party); DAVYDOV (Non-party); PETER SPRINDISH (ex-Communist))—all are workmen from Petrograd, four of them from the war-medical instrument factory, Baulin from the water power station, Sprindish from the thread manufactory—for one year for having participated in an economic strike; P. I. EVDOKIMOFF (popular Socialist), cooperator from Petrograd, for one year; N. I. MANDELSTAMM, J. A. BRAUDE, B. N. PERETZ, SOPHIE LVOVNA DEUTSCH, L. L. KINBER, all Menshevists, from Petrograd, for two years, except the last-named, who was sentenced to three years; L. M. HORWITZ-VLASSOVA, woman doctor from Petrograd, for 2 years in connection with the All-Russian Congress of Medical Practitioners.

There are also in Orenburg the following exiles from Moscow: J. M. ZUBELEVITCH (Dasha of Kronstadt), S.-R., for two years; D. G. LIBEROVA, for helping S-R.'s, for two years; D. N. EVDOKIMOV, for helping S.-R.'s, for one year; K. M. PONOTCHEVSKAYA, for helping S.-R.'s, for two years; M. D. SHEIENSON, for helping S.-R.'s, for two years; B. N. GUTMAN ((Menshevist), for one year; DR. L. B. GRANOVSKY (Menshevist), in connection with the Congress of Medical practitioners, for two years; N. D. DUMKO (Menshevist), engineer, for one year; Dr. G. VERKHOVSKY (Menshevist), Medical Congress case, for two years; Drs. F. F. STANKEVITCH and N. I. GUREVITCH (Const. Democ.), Medical Congress case, for two years; V. N. KAPLAN (S.-R.), from Odessa, for two years; L. M. GLOTZER (S.-R.), from Petrograd, for two years; I. O. FRUMKIN (S.-R.), doctor, from Kieff, Medical Congress case, for three years; S. I. ISRAELSON, doctor from Orel, Medical Congress case, for two years. Besides these, there are in Orenburg 10 members of the clergy, who, together with some doctors (Hurwitz-Vlassova Gurevitch and others) are kept away from the colony.

A PROTEST FROM TOMSK

(December 1924)

To the United State Political Administration ("G. P. U."):
To the Chief of the Secret Department:

Statement of the Administrative Exile, the anarcho-syndicalist RUBINTCHIK-MEER, Efrem Borrissovitch.

At the end of June, 1924, the sentence of internment in the Suzdal concentration camp was, owing to my illness, changed into banishment to Tomsk. Before my departure I was assured by the respon-

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E. B. RUBINTCHIK-MEER
Exile in Tomsk, Siberia and facsimile of letter by him.

В Объединенное Государственное Политическое управление.
Начальнику Секретного Отдела
Заявление Административно-Ссыльного Анархо-Синдикалиста
Рубинчик-Меер Ефрема Борисовича

В Конце Июня 1924г. Сибгубсудом Колл. легкое мне было замечено по болезни высылкой в г. Ташкент. Причем перед отправкой мне было заверено ответственными сотрудниками ГПУ г. Киева, что никаких препятствий к моему поступлению на службу ГПУ чинить не будут. Несмотря на это категорическое заявление, каждый раз когда мне удавалось найти себе работу, местное отделение ГПУ запрещало руководителям данного учреждения принять меня на работу.
Последнее запрещение пятое по счету (Книжный магазин Центрального Рабочего Кооператива, кн. маг. Губоно кн. маг. Сибирского Краевого Издательства и Др.) было послано в письменной форме за подписью Зам. нач. Томского Отдела ГПУ Гущонова.
После того, как я имел неоднократные категорические препятствия со стороны ГПУ к моему поступлению на службу, я решил в последний раз обратиться по этому поводу с гр. Гущоновым и окончательно убедился, что к работе меня не допустят.
Не имея никаких средств для лечения я запрашивал местное ГПУ о предоставлении мне возможности бесплатно лечиться в одной из

Здешних больниц, но до сих пор никакого ответа не получил...
По поводу недопущения меня к работе мною было послано заявление Зам. начальнику Секретного Отдела ОГПУ Андрееву заказным отправлением от 13-9-24г. на 1-ое и не получил ответа а местное ГПУ никаких распоряжений.
Настоящее положение не только не дает мне возможности лечиться болезнь которая все время прогрессирует но обрекает меня на голод.
Категорически протестуя против подобных тактических ГПУ я настаиваю на предоставлении мне возможности поехать для лечения в Германию.

Член Союза Анархо-Синдикалистов
Голос Труда
Рубинчик-Меер Ефрем Борисович

8 Декабря 1924г
г. Томск Татарский пер. 12

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sible agent of the "G. P. U.", citizen Kil, that no obstacle would be put by the "G. P. U." in the way of my accepting employment.

In spite of this emphatic declaration, each time I was able to find employment, the local department of the "G. P. U." forbade the heads of the corresponding institutions to take me into their employ.

The last prohibition—the fifth—(bookstore of the Central Labor Cooperative; book store of the provincial department of National Education; book store of the Siberian Publishing Department, and others) was notified in writing under the signature of the Assistant-Chief of the Tomsk Department of the "G. P. U.," Chuntonoff.

After having had thus an undeniable proof of the obstacles placed by the "G. P. U." in the way of my finding any employment, I resolved to have a final explanation on the matter with citizen Chuntonoff. I convinced myself that I will not be permitted to take up any employment.

Having no means to undergo medical treatment, I asked the local "G. P. U." to allow me to have free treatment at one of the local hospitals. Up to the present I have received no reply.

I sent, in connection with the refusal to permit me to take up any employment, a statement to the Assistant-Chief of the Secret Department of the "G. P. U.," Andreyeva, which I forwarded by registered post on September 13, 1924. I have received no reply, and the local "G. P. U." has received no instructions.

Such a state of things not only gives me no possibility of curing my illness, which progresses all the time, but condemns me to starvation.

I protest emphatically against these tactics of the "G. P. U." and insist that I should be allowed to go abroad for medical treatment.

Member of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Union "Golos Truda."

Efrem Borrissovitch RUBINTCHIK-MEER.

Dec. 8, 1924. Tomsk.

Tatarsky per., 19.

THE LOCK-OUT*

(May, 1922)

By the order of the Presidium of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (*Tcheka*) of January 10, (1922, apparently, Ed.), of this year, I was sentenced to exile in the town of Velikyi Ustiug for a term of one year.

On February 15 I arrived in Ustiug, secured a position with great difficulty, as the local employment office could get me none. I found living quarters and arranged for the arrival from Smolensk

*This communication was officially addressed to the "G. P. U." by the administrative exile. Boris N. Butiagin.

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of my family, consisting of my wife and an infant one year and two months old.

On May 20, in Ustiug, the "G. P. U." sent me the following notice by messenger to be delivered under receipt:

"Secret Operative Department, Section 1. To Citizen B. N. Butiagin:

"To enable you to make all the necessary preparations, I hereby inform you that, at the order of the Chief of the Secret Operative Department, you will be sent on Monday, May 26, to the town of Kotlass, in the Severo-Dvinsk province, for residence there as an administrative exile. The original order has been signed by the proper authorities."

In this manner the "G. P. U.", absolutely unexpectedly, without preferring any charges against me and without any trial, assigned me to a new place of exile in a small town. This is done under the pretext of the necessity of vacating living quarters in the city, according to the chief of the local "G. P. U." Four months I have been here and the city was not too crowded, and only now, when I finally settled here with my family that starved in Smolensk during my imprisonment, it appears necessary to make room in Ustug by removing B. N. Butiagin (none of the other political exiles are being removed from the city), and to send me urgently with my wife and child on one day's notice to Kotlass, where the only free space is on the floor of the third-class waiting-room in the railway station, and where no work is to be found.

To the "honor" of the "G. P. U." it must be added that the act described above is not the only measure of arbitrary rule shown here. At the end of April the "G. P. U." demanded that I leave my position in the Forestry Union, and upon my refusal to fulfill this unlawful demand, had me arrested and imprisoned for 28 hours. This happened after the employment department refused to find me work. I pointed out then and consider it necessary to remind the "G. P. U." now that I was sentenced to exile to the provincial city of Ustiug and given the right of securing freely a position, as a result of an engagement with the Presidium of the Extraordinary Commission concluded on the seventh day of my hunger-strike in the communist Butyrky prison early in January of this year. I also consider it necessary to remind the leaders of the "G. P. U." that even the Czarist governments never went so far in limiting the field for employment to administrative exiles.

The Czarist government prohibited the service of exiles in such government offices as the police, gendarmery, treasury department, but recognizing the law, it never prohibited employment in other organizations and enterprises.

The communist government or its agents have gone farther than Czarism and the conditions of exile in the years of 1914-1915 pale

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in comparison with the new exile system inaugurated in the only "free" land of its kind in the world, with the most "left" government of all.

Stating all this, I should like in any event to know whether the cruelty to which I and my family are subjected is an arbitrary act of the local authorities or whether the central "G. P. U." supports this outrage.

I want to know this because I am more and more under the impression that there is no law in Soviet Russia and that the representatives even of the highest Soviet authority, of the Political Department of the State ("G. P. U."), apparently consider it a bourgeois prejudice to carry out their pledges.

(*Signed*) BORIS NIKOLAYEVITCH BUTIAGIN

Velikyi Ustiug
May 21, 1922

EXPERIENCES OF JULIA M. ZUBELEVITCH, SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARY*

(From Questionnaire)

(Deported 1924. Affidavit dated 1925)

1. Julia Mikhailovna Zubelevitch, Party pseudonym "Dasha."
2. In Viatka Province.
3. 42 years of age.
4. To the Party Socialist-Revolutionists.
5. Since 1904
6. I never left the Party; but for a certain period I was not active, as I did not agree with the Party tactics (with the tactics of armed struggle against the Bolsheviki, etc.) and also because of ill health.
7. (a) Since 1905 I was illegal: the police were looking for me for participation in the peasant movement in the Viatka Province. Afterwards, for participation in the Kronstadt uprising of 1906.

(b) Was arrested twice (under the Czar—*Ed.*) both times under a false name; once in Petrograd, then in Moscow. The first time I was imprisoned 4 months, then one month I travelled by *etape* (by slow stages, sometimes on foot.—*Tr.*) to Orenburg. Another time I was in prison 3 days. Both times I succeeded in escaping: once from the Orenburg Hospital, the other time from the Moscow police station. I lived illegally till 1911, when I left, also illegally, abroad. To Russia I returned in the summer of 1917.

*This questionnaire is of great length. Unimportant details are left out in this translation and indicated with asterisks. The key to the questionnaire will be found under section on the questionnaires. This and the extracts from the following questionnaires are given here because they relate largely to exile and because they are typical of the experience of political opponents of the Soviet Government.

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8-14. Under the Bolsheviki I was arrested several times. I shall tell separately about each case.

The *first* time, arrested in March, 1918, in Toroptsi, Pskov Province. I was a member of the Kronstadt Investigation Committee which was opposed to the Toropets Soviet. Moscow was on the side of the Toropets Soviet. * * * Together with some comrades I was arrested on the street. * * * The Chief of the Lettish soldiers, Berzin, came to the room, quickly pulled out his revolver, and began my examination. A male Socialist with a revolver in his hands wanted to examine a woman Socialist who was unarmed! * * * Later Berzin came several times to talk to us. Gradually his manner changed. In the morning he came and declared that he was led into a misunderstanding, begged to shake the hands of "true revolutionists" and declared us free. With revolutionary songs we departed home.

The *second* time I was arrested in Moscow, in March, 1920. The family of Tchernov† was about to leave for Bashkira, the train was ready * * * the girl children, formerly my pupils, asked me to remain a while, to stay over night with them. At night an unknown soldier came into the car and told the girls that their mother was arrested in the city, and that he had come by her request to warn them and, through them, Tchernov. * * * The girls lost their heads completely. * * * We lost each other outside, in the dark night. Reaching the street I was arrested on the excuse that there was some theft committed that night. * * * The unknown soldier proved to be a provocator. * * * Only after 5 days was the little girl (one of the daughters of Tchernov, 10 years of age. *Tr.*) released, after they tried with kindness to get her to tell where her father was. But her sisters, 15 and 16 years old, were kept 2 weeks. Evidently that 10-year-old child went through a great deal, because after that her hair began to fall out and soon she became entirely bald like a billiard ball. Only a year later did she begin to improve. * * * The *Tcheka* magistrate informed me that I was being held because I am too much interested in the family of Tchernov, and that therefore I might be dangerous. (I did indeed inquire several times, with natural anxiety, what had happened to the little girl.)

Another Description of the Petrograd "Inner Prison"

The *third* time I was arrested in Petrograd, in March, 1922. I was visiting a Left. S. R. woman friend, when I fell sick at her place. *Tchekists* came to make a search. They arrested everybody, but left

(†Victor Tchernov, leader of the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Right, who was very active at this time (1920) in opposition to the Bolsheviki. His unexpected appearance and speech and subsequent mysterious disappearance at the meeting of the printers' union in Moscow, May, 1920, which was attended by the first British Labor Delegation, created a tremendous sensation at the time).

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a *Tchekist* guard in the room. They behaved so terribly during the search that it filled me with terror to remain alone with them. And I made no mistake regarding them. When one of the Left S. R.'s, who was in the house, attempted to run, they caught him, beat him till he bled, and practiced on him such sadistic tortures (gouging his eyes and other things) that he repeatedly lost consciousness. (See letter of Shabalin, page 116—Ed.)

* * * They brought us to the Gorohovaya (Petrograd *Tcheka* prison. *Tr.*) To wash oneself and for other purposes one had to pass a long corridor. I was not physically able to do it. My feet would not carry me, it was dark before my eyes—an acquaintance would catch me in her arms and lay me on the bed. That was all happening before the eyes of the administration, but it was impossible to get them to do anything. * * * We called for the doctor. He transferred me at once to those sick with typhus. * * * For all the two months of my stay, there was not a single death from typhus, so splendidly was organized the work of medical aid. The more wonderful were these results in view of the fact that hospital conditions in general were most inadequate: since February the hospital was not heated (at least not our building), the sick shivered under their old, torn blankets. The latter were never disinfected, but would be given first to one ill with typhus, then to another patient sick with recurrent typhus, and vice versa. Instead of bread there was some mixture of flour and other things. * * *

When I was later in the inner prison, in Moscow, I was surprised at the plentiful supply of bread. I think one pound and a half was allowed per person, and hot food at that. And, as many in Moscow were receiving food from relatives, and ate their own bread, official bread remained a-plenty. Those that cleaned the cells were often forbidden to take the left-over bread, and we had to throw it out into the toilet. That was in the capital—perhaps some foreigners would take a look at the prison—it was necessary to make a good front. And there, somewhere in Petrograd, the common prisoners are starving to death for lack of bread.*

The conditions in the "inner prison" are special ones: it is not permitted to speak loud in the cells, not even to sing to yourself very low. In the corridor no word can be spoken (for fear of the dungeon), but even carpets are on the floor to deaden the steps. No pencil, or paper is permitted. To hand in a petition one must wait till the famous Lettish Dukiss will visit the cells. * * *

16. All examinations were recorded and signed by me. To be found in "G.P.U." 17-18. The sentence was approximately this: "For active work in the Party of the Socialist-Revolutionists sentenced by

(*See page 134, note as to Butyrky prison, Moscow). For further description of the Petrograd and Moscow "inner prisons" see section on prisons.

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the Collegium of the "G.P.U." to two years exile in Orenburg." After having read it, I ask: "But where are your facts?" "We need no facts." "What then?" "Something else," replied the magistrate (Braude).*

* * * The sentence was changed after 8 months, to Akhtiubinsk instead of Orenburg (to a town on the Tashkent railroad line, in Kirghisia, having eleven thousand inhabitants).

Conditions of Exile

19. I spent in exile almost 2 years: from July, 1922 till March, 1924. * * * Many would arrive (in places of exile) without money, and broken, physically as well as morally, because of the long imprisonment and hard journey. Some of them have been sick with typhus in prison, others sick from dry hunger strikes (without water), demanding to be sent per convoy instead of *etape*. Anna I. Volkova, a SR., and K. M. Ponatchevnaya were among the latter. One suffered a severe prison beating, with an injury to his head, and was brought to the exile place entirely dumb and an absolute invalid physically and psychically. Only after 5 months of careful attention was he gradually getting back to himself and partly recovered his speech. That was Moisei Yakovlevitch Bogorad, who was beaten up in Yareslav. Another, Sophie L. Deitsch, a Social Democrat, arrived with a severe illness, to which was soon added malaria and nervous prostration. S. A. Pokrovsky, Socialist Revolutionary, was deathly sick, and had a series of certificates from doctors from the clinics in which he was kept before his exile. Lev B. Granovsky, Social Democrat, ill with progressive deafness. The Social Democrat Boris N. Guterman, nearly blind, and in danger of complete blindness if he should fail to get the proper medical attention. Raissa Bogorad, a woman suffering from appendicitis and needing care and an operation . . . And numerous others, that one cannot count.

* * * It came so that it was almost impossible to get official employment. Neither in Orenburg nor at other points. But it is necessary to remark that the exiles recommended themselves with splendid work. Often there were talented specialists among them, of whom even the capital might be proud. * * * They went body and soul into their work. * * * They would bring into order and working capacity already ruined apparatus. The chiefs of various institutions could not laud them enough and would energetically intercede for them with the "G. P. U." But . . . considerations of higher politics would triumph, thus dooming the apparatus to ruin again and the exiles to the torture of unemployment.

To look for private employment was very hard, for it was neces-

*Exile in Kirghisia ended March, 1924, when exile was changed to banishment for three years.

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sary for that to have acquaintance with the local inhabitants, and that was severely persecuted.

* * * Beginning with 1923 there was a constant strain on our nerves: endless arrests, not to speak of searches; calls to the "G. P. U.", repressions for every insignificant thing, deprivation of possibility of work, renewed exiles (to still more dismal places), being bound and taken away to further exile, calling out armed forces, almost executions and shootings. They began to send us away one or two at a time, to the most God-forsaken places of Kirghisia, like Irghis which is a spot 150 versts from any railroad—or Temira, Turgaia, Akmolinsk, Atbassar. Who does not know these places can have no idea of the forsakenness of them. There is almost no intelligenzia there. Round about only Kirghis people. Some points are several hundred versts from any railroad station. Bread is hard to get, because the Kirghis eat only the meat of sheep with "lepeshki" (sort of cakes made of flour). When it is considered that in the famine of 1921 the natives had lost a tremendous number of their camels and other cattle, and that now they are nearly starving, then one will understand in what position our comrades are among them. Even in Orenburg, only three days ride from Moscow, where at the head of the "G. P. U." there were comparatively intelligent people, our comrades were subjected to some terrible experiences. Then one can imagine what is awaiting them in those places far away in Turkestan, etc. The exile there cannot hope for intercession by the Center. He is cut off from the civilized world and entirely at the mercy of the local satraps.

Exile during the regime of the Tsars was for some definite period and a person could make his arrangements accordingly. But now there is nothing definite in these matters any more. Today you may be sent out to Orenburg for two years, and in six months you may find yourself in Akhtiubinsk, in another month in Tcherges, then in Tchelgara, and then you may unexpectedly get another sentence of 3 years to some most desolate spot in Kirghisia. And so endlessly.*** Systematically, day in, day out, with cold deliberation are being committed bloodless murders.

Tcheka Brutality in Orenberg

* * * They let us out of the prison,* after our giving a pledge to report in a week at the "G.P.U." with our belongings, in order to be sent further. The last evening before departure we wanted to spend together. Those that were to remain in the city came to bid good-bye to the departing. At 2 o'clock at night came the agents of the "G.P.U." and arrested all of us. At the building of the "G.P.U." they wanted

* This account refers to the same events apparently, as those related in a "Bolshevist Celebration," given above. Page 35.

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to separate us: those that were to depart were ordered to the office, upstairs; the others, into the cellar; that is, into the prison. Quickly having considered the matter, we decided that our comrades must not go to prison, and we also declared that we would not go to the office till they would permit our visitors to go home. Several times they asked us to do as we were bid, then they got rough. No one of us moved. We remained standing on the street. It was in the month of March, at 4 in the morning. Cold, a sleepless night. Some were sick (Besrutchno, a consumptive; the two Bogorads, S. L. Deutsch, woman, very ill, and a number of others). Several hours we spent in this way. * * * Suddenly we saw a dark mass approaching, and sixty Red Army men threw themselves upon us with bayonets. The prison Commandant and the *Tchekist* Uglov were in command. With their assistants they rushed among us, pushing, swearing, and catching us by the arms. Meantime our Elders carried on conversations with the administration and tried their best to avoid a tragedy. The agents and the soldiers were catching singly those that were to be sent away. It was a disgusting sight and very hard to bear. However, each of us had given a promise to all not to allow things to come to struggle and therefore we were compelled to suffer this outrageous treatment and violence. But this did not pass without its effect. Only in that way was prevented in Orenburg a tragedy similar to that of the Solovki. . . (The "massacre" in the Solovietz Camp of December 19, 1923).

20. Relatives in Poland succeeded in procuring from the Polish authorities permission for me to enter Poland. I sent in a request to the Special Commission of the All-Russian Executive Committee, asking permission to go to Poland to my relatives. The Commission changed my Russian exile to deportation abroad for 3 years. In March, 1924, four months before the end of my term (of exile) I received a ticket, money for a seat (in the train) and for provisions on the way, and I left for Poland.

(*Signed*) JULIA ZUBELEVITCH.

January 1, 1925.
Warsaw.

EXPERIENCES OF OSSORGIN, INTELLECTUAL

(From Questionnaire)

Deals in experiences in Russia up to the fall of 1922 when writer was deported abroad.

1. MICHAEL ANDREYEVITCH OSSORGIN.*
2. Perm, October 7, 1878.
3. 46 years.

* This questionnaire is given in full except the last part which merely expresses at length the affiant's uncomplimentary opinion of the Bolshevik rule.

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4. Non-party.

5-6. In the years 1904-1905 belonged to the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

7. In 1899, as student, was arrested and exiled to Perm; returned the next year to Moscow.

In 1905 was arrested during the December rebellion in Moscow; was kept for three months in the Taganka prison without examination; was the accused under p. 1 of Section 100 of the Criminal Code: armed revolt. Released on bail in 1906. The proceedings were dropped. I was sentenced, by administrative order, to be exiled to Turkhansk for 5 years; escaped and lived abroad until 1916 when I voluntarily returned to Russia. The term of exile was rescinded because of the time that had elapsed, but was ordered to leave Moscow; I refused; compulsory exile was not carried out owing to the 1917 Revolution which intervened.

8. In 1918, there was an injunction against me as Editor of *Nasha Rodino* ("Our Fatherland")—formerly *Vlast Naroda* ("The People's Power.") Was not arrested. The court fined the publishing firm and the publication of the paper was suspended.

In 1919 I was arrested at home, in the daytime, by order of the Moscow *Tcheka*. Kept in a cellar of the Moscow *Tcheka* (called "the ship") where 70 prisoners were sleeping on boards or on the floor; among them were menshevists, left socialist-revolutionists, bandits, peasants, officers, and the former Minister of War, Polivanoff. Each night men were taken out to be shot—mostly bandits. The men condemned to death were kept behind a separate partition. A youth of about 17, whose name I have forgotten, was thus carried away to his doom in my presence. The "Commissar of Death," Ivanoff, himself an ex-bandit, was shooting the men with his own hand. The conditions of prison life were heavy to bear (parasites, stuffiness, absence of medical attendance).

Was released after 5 days, thanks to the intervention of the Writers' Union. I was released personally by the President of the Moscow Soviet, Kameneff, who came to inspect the place (before that, when he had asked about me, I could not be found in the list of prisoners). No accusation was brought forward. The reasons for the arrest were not given. Kameneff explained to me that it was a "trifle" and a "misunderstanding."

In August, 1921 I was arrested, together with others, at a meeting of the "Committee to Help the Starving," in the daytime, by a general order of the *Vetcheka*. After a short examination and search on the spot, I was first sent to the examining department (the so-called "Avanessoff Bureau"), then to the Inner Prison of the *Vetcheka* where I was kept for 2½ months, until sent to exile. When asked by us what we were accused of, the examining magistrates (I was examined thrice, each time by a different magistrate) stated that the *Vetcheka* was not

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obliged to reply to such questions. The magistrates were both stupid and abusive. The examining authorities attempted to prove that the "Committee to Help the Starving" had political aims. Personally, I was accused of having attempted to give to the organ of that Committee, "Help" (*Pomoshtsh*), which was appearing under my editorship and under the control of the Censor, an appearance similar to the newspaper *Russkyia Vyedomosti.*† Thanks to the intervention of Nansen and other influential persons in Europe, I was saved from being shot—a fate which I was supposed to share with Dr. Kishkin, Prof. Prokovitch. Ekaterina Kusskova, the cooperators Koroboff and Cherkassoff. Without any accusation having been presented, I was sent, together with the above-mentioned, to exile. The place fixed for me was a lonely spot in the famine-stricken district of Krasnokokshaisk (formerly Tzarevokokshaisk). I fell ill on the way, remained in Kazan and from there returned, in 1922, to Moscow to receive medical treatment.

The conditions in the *Vetcheka* prison were, as far as I was personally concerned, very hard ones. Seven or eight persons were kept together in the "solitary" cell. We slept on boards and on straw mattresses. The window gave on a dark yard and was whitewashed. Food was insufficient and of bad quality (but food baskets were allowed to be brought in twice a week from the outside). The cell was so damp that laundry would not dry; the walls were covered with green mould. The medical officer was visiting the prisoners, if called out, twice a week. He was very rude. No walks were allowed. Visits to the W. C. were allowed twice a day, and all the prisoners were sent out, for this purpose, for five minutes. The waiting in a queue for the W. C. was the greatest physical torture. The wardens (Letts) were exceptionally rude, using most foul language. The magistrates would often call us out at night; we would then be led along dark corridors and kicked in the ribs at turnings. New prisoners were always brought at night. During the second month of my incarceration, I became swollen all over; I began coughing and my health broke down, never to return to its former state. The medical officer called it "neurasthenia" and prescribed sodium salicylate. Thanks to intervention of friends, I was allowed, in the second month, to receive books (in the French language) which relieved the monotony. It should be added that the attitude towards members of the Committee was exceptionally "liberal," as we were all men with names known in Russia, while the foreign press was greatly interested in some of the inmates.*

On a frosty night of November, 1921 (the thermometer was marking 15-20° Réaumur), I was called out with my belongings—ill, swollen all over, wrapped in poultices—was put on a lorry with two other ex-

†Daily newspaper appearing before the revolution.

*For other descriptions of the "Inner Prison" of the Moscow *Vecheka*, see section II, on prisons.

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iles and brought to the railway station where the escort (of 5 men) lost their heads, their bags and our documents. We ourselves asked the train conductor to make some room for us. My wife was allowed to accompany me. The car was full of people sleeping on the floor of the car or under the seats. There was no lighting and we tried to avoid insects by the use of napthalene (there was, at that time, a typhus fever epidemic). The windows were broken and there was, of course, no heating. Thus we travelled to Kazan: the journey took us *three* days; we fed during this period on the reserves which our relatives gave us at the station. We also received some food from the escort. I was almost carried bodily, so ill and weak was I.

In Kazan we stopped, together with the escort, in a cooperative hotel where we knew some friends. A telegram from Moscow ordered the arrest of our escort for having lost our documents, while we were left free, under obligation not to leave the city. My companions were, after this, banished to Krasnakokshaisk (8 days' journey on carts through the woods) while myself, ill as I was, I was allowed to remain temporarily in Kazan. Six months later, thanks to influential pressure and to the remonstrances of medical men and professors of Kazan, I received the permission to return to Moscow for treatment. This privilege was also extended to the other exiled members of the Committee, but E. Kusskova and Prokopovitch were asked to leave the country.

In the summer of 1922, while living in the country, I heard that my town flat was visited by agents of the "G. P. U." with the purpose of arresting me (simultaneously with this, were arrested and sent to the Inner Prison about 70 well-known Moscow professors and writers). When the Tchekists came, in their motor cars, to my country home, I hid in the woods. I kept hiding for three days. Having then found out that I only risked deportation abroad, I presented myself to the Tcheka. I was examined and immediately released with an injunction to go abroad within five days.

All those who were deported—myself among them—were examined together, the accusation having been prepared and typed; the sentence, too, was prepared in advance and ready typed. All this did not take more than half an hour for each person. The examination was flagrantly ridiculous (e. g., "What is your attitude towards the reform of higher education", "How do you look upon the trial of Socialist-Revolutionists," etc.). The accusation was: "Considering that during five years he refused to become reconciled with the Soviet Power and harmed it during the most difficult period of its existence . . ." The sentence read as follows: ". . . is being deported abroad for the period of three years"; but, verbally, came the addition: "for ever." The choice was given: to travel by paying one's own way, or to wait in prison until deported wholesale by the "étape," in this case the State paying the expenses. All chose the former method. Before being re-

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leased the following written statement was required from us: "In case of attempting to escape on the way or returning from abroad without the permission of the Soviet Power, I shall be liable to suffer the extreme penalty (to be shot)."

As we had planned our own departure abroad and obtained, ourselves, the visas to Germany (the Tcheka having met with a refusal at the German Consulate), there were no incidents in connection with our deportation. We managed to obtain seats on board the steamer, and we were allowed to take with us 200 dollars in cash per person, as well as the necessary belongings and books. Our deportation was a "European scandal," and the Communists had to reckon with it. We were able to pay our journey by selling our things. On the eve of our departure our flats and rooms were, upon the indication of the "G. P. U." requisitioned by the Housing Department.

The deportation of professors and writers was described more than once and in sufficient details in the press; this relieves me from further descriptions. * * *

(*Signed*) MICHAEL OSSORGIN.

Paris.
November 29, 1924.

A MENSHEVIK IN EXILE

(From Questionnaire)
(1923)

Garwy-Bronstein, Peter Abramovitch.
Odessa, 15-1-1881.
43.
Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.
Since end of 1899. * * *

July 3, 1922, (arrested) in Moscow, as I was leaving my place of employment, I was detained by officers in civil dress and taken to Lubianka to the *Vetcheka*, where they began to bring scores of other comrades. In the *Vetcheka* we passed two nights pell-mell—men and women, young and old, even babes at the breast, socialists and criminals, all on bare benches and on the floor, without a sign anywhere of a bed. On the third day we were called out, an "Article" paragraph (of the Code. Ed.) was read to us and the next moment we were placed into a dark prison truck and taken to the railroad station. There was already ready for us a car of the Stolypin type, with bars. Some of us, as for instance Ber-Gurevitch—a member of the Central Committee of the Party—were even without coats and hats. They took us away secretly, without informing our relatives, and without provisions, to Yaroslav, the former *katorzhnaia* (hard labor) prison, where we were placed in solitary cells.

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After 3 or 4 weeks they called us out for examination, but no definite charge was presented to us. A few days later they informed me of the decision to exile me for two years to Tcherdin (North Ural).

The decision simply read: Because the accusation is not proven, the case is to be quashed (such and such a paragraph) and to be placed in the archives, but on basis of the decree about administrative exile, because of anti-soviet activity, to be exiled for two years under surveillance of the militia (police. *Ed.*).

A few days later we were taken in a prisoners' car to Perm, where there almost took place a bloody tragedy. The point is that we were sent to exile without our relatives being given an opportunity to supply us clothing and money. We demanded that we be held in Perm till our relatives could arrive or some one from the Red Cross.*

The Chief of the Perm Tcheka came to the car with a company of soldiers and tried to apply force. It was just by luck that a massacre was prevented.

In Tcherdin, which is a former place of exile used by the Tsar, we took up the same quarters in which the politicals lived during the Tsarist regime!

We received no warm clothing, nor provisions, and packages (from friends) they did not deliver to us for 6 months. We found in the city an epidemic of dysentery which literally decimated the population, because in the hospital and in the drug store there were almost no drugs, not even castor oil.

Our correspondence was censored. We were not permitted to take employment. One of us, Y. S. Sokolik, found a place as bookkeeper in the (Soviet) Financial Bureau, but after a short time he was discharged by insistence of the *Tcheka*, discharged as not being a member of the union, and the union refused to accept him as a member because he was a socialist in exile. In March, 1923, my exile was changed to permission to go abroad.

(*Signed*) P. GARWY-BRONSTEIN.

Berlin, Dec. 2, 1924.

EXPERIENCES OF IDELSON, ZIONIST-SOCIALIST

(From Questionnaire)

(1924)

Konotop, Tchernigov Gov't., 2-XI-1895.
Israel Boruchovitz Idelson.
29 years of age.
Member Zionist Socialist Party.

*Mme. Peshkova's, "Political Red Cross".

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(Was sentenced late in 1923, administratively, to 3 years' exile to Ust-Syssolsk in Siberia. Ed.)

In the Taganka (prison) we were informed that the *etape* would leave before the date set for its departure (not giving the prisoners an opportunity to prepare for the journey, to get warm clothing, see relatives, etc. *Ed.*)

A member of our Party, Ginsburg, who was to be deported to the Turukhan Krai; the Socialist Revolutionist Stroganov, sentenced to three years in Siberia; and the Anarcho-syndicalists Mamaev and Minaev (who had already spent one month in Pertominsk and one year

I. B. IDELSON DOCUMENTS (Zionist Socialist).

У. С. С. Р.
Н. К. В. Д.
ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЕ
УПРАВЛЕНИЕ
ПРИ ГУВИСПОЛКОМЕ.
15/X 1923 г.
№ 410
г. Киев, Екатерин. 16.
ТЕЛЕФОНЫ:

Справка.

Дана сия гр. Идельсону Израилю Берковичу в том, что он содержался под стражей при Киевском Губернском Отделе Государственного Политическ. Управления и освобожден 15 октября дня 1923 года под подписку о невыезде из места постоянного жительства гор. Киева впредь до окончания следствия по его делу.

Основание: Ордер КОГПУ за № 615

Секретарь ПГПУ и КОГПУ

Начальник IX-го Отделения

(Translation)

NOTE OF INFORMATION

U. S. S. R.
N. K. V. D.
Government
Political
Administration

Kiev Government Department
At the Government
Executive Comm.
15/X/1923
No. 410
Kiev, Ekaterin. 16.
Telephones

This is issued to Idelson, Israel Berkovitch, in that he was held under guard in the Kiev Gov't Dept. of the Government Political Administration and was freed Oct. 15, 1923 by giving a written pledge not to leave the place of his constant residence, the city of Kiev, till the conclusion of the examination of his case.
On the basis of: Order K.O.G.P.U. No. 615.
Secretary P. P. G. P. U.
and K. O. G. P. U. (Signature)
Chief of the IX Bureau (Signature)
(Seal)

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in the Solovki and who were to be transferred to Siberia because of having acquired active consumption)—all declared that because of the suddenness of the departure they had no time to receive warm clothing and therefore could not travel that *etape*.

They were threatened with violence, and then we and six other Socialists (who were to go with the same *etape* and who had no cause to refuse) declared that if those comrades would be compelled by force, they would also refuse to accompany the *etape*. We all undressed and lay down on the benches.

Then guards were brought into the cell, and Stroganov—nearest

(Translation)

(Photo on the left, Reverse side of Photo on right)

Komendatura K. G. O. P. U.
Personal Card No.....
Form No.....
Name—Idelson
Patronymic—Israel Boruchovitch
Pseudonym—In charge of—S. O. (Secret Dpt. Ed.)
Case in hands of magistrate—(Name undecipherable)
Charged with—Membership in C. S. P. (Zionist Socialist Party. Ed.)
Personal signature of prisoner—IDELSON.
Commandant K. O. G. P. U. (Signature undecipherable).

(Photo on right)

Kiev Government Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution, Speculation, and Crimes in Office.
Pass No.....
Citizen..... permitted
visit..... arrested (prisoner).....
(what relationship)
held
prison
date.....19.....
Commandant K. G. Tcheka.....
Manager Prison Bureau

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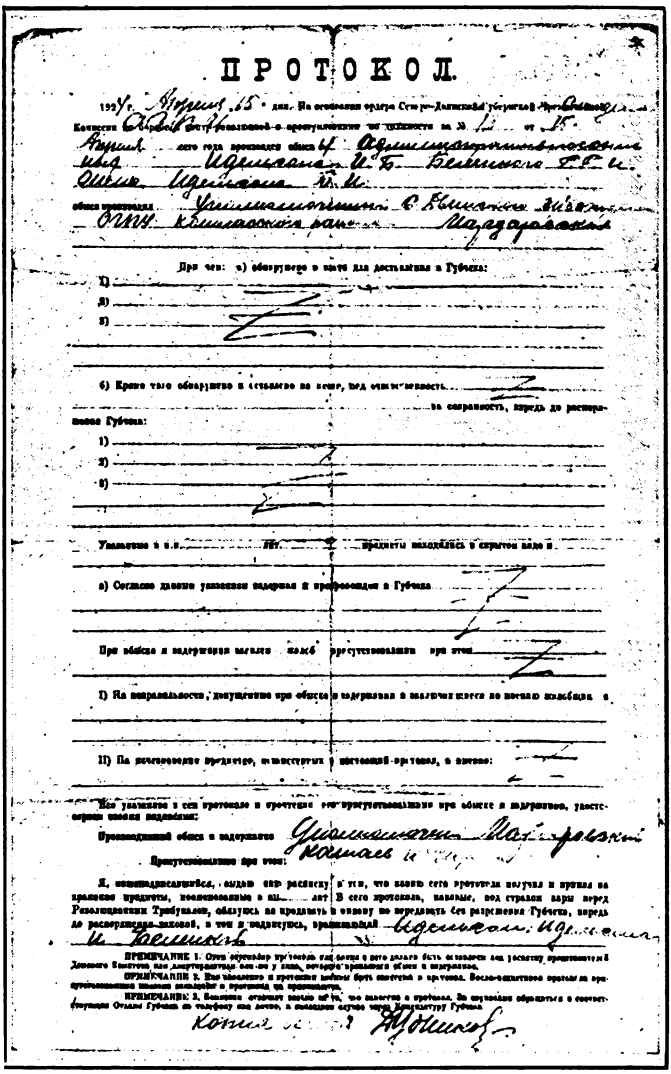
to the door—was forcibly dragged from the cell and placed in the corridor. Then they approached Mamaev and began to pull him off the bench. But at this juncture the soldiers—to whom we had all the while protested and explained the situation—began to hesitate and finally stopped their violence. As a result, the four named comrades were permitted to remain while the rest of us agreed to journey further.

That happened on January 13, 1924. * * *



ПРОТОКОЛ.

Facsimile of Document given to the administrative exile, Idelson, by the representative of the "O. G. P. U." in Kotlass, North Dvinsk Province.

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In the Viatka prison the authorities declared to me and to my comrades Epstein and Belenki that from Kotlass to the station Ust'-Syssolsk (Ziriansky District) we would have to travel on foot, about 250 versts. We demanded to be left in Viatka till the beginning of navigation, or that we be given warm clothing and that horses be supplied for our journey. To attain this demand we again had to resort to a hunger-strike, which lasted 8 days. As a result we were officially notified that we would not be sent further than Kotlass, which is the railroad terminal, till the opening of navigation.

Later, however, we were sent to Sol'-Vitchegodsk, which is 18 versts further than Kotlass.

In Kotlass we spent 8 days in jail, literally eaten alive by bedbugs—which for size and numbers I have never before nor since seen equalled anywhere else.

In Sol-'Vitchegodsk we lived at liberty, but of course under constant surveillance of the "G. P. U.", to which we had to report for registration three times a week.

In March (1924. Ed.) they again wanted to send us on foot to Ust'-Syssolsk, six politicals: 3 members of the Zionist Socialist Party, 2 Right Social Revolutionists, and 1 Left Social Revolutionist, but we succeeded in remaining where we were.

In view of my illness permission was given me by the Special Commission on Administrative Exile to change my exile to deportation to Palestine during the same period of 3 years.

I left without a guard.

I think that it is sufficiently clear that the sentence of exile was pronounced in my absence. * * *

In March, 1924, one of the exiled Socialist-Revolutionists (whose name we could not then ascertain) was sent on foot from Kotlass to Ust-Syssolsk.

Charlottenburg, January 5, 1925.

(*Signature*) ISRAEL IDELSON.

A "G. P. U." EXPLANATION

(Fall of 1922)

From the questionnaire* of Nadeschda Dmitrova Peremeschko, Menshevik. She states in her questionnaire that she was sentenced in the summer of 1922 to exile for three years in Turukhansky Krai. At the last moment this was changed to exile abroad without privilege of returning to Russia. "On my questioning why exile to Turukhansky Krai was changed to exile forever, the "G. P. U." magistrate, Austrin, frankly declared to me: Because three years in Turukhansky Krai are equal to a lifetime abroad."

*See questionnaire printed in full on page 269.

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EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

Moscow, September, 1924.

. . . Sonya Bogoyavlenskaya has fled from her place of banishment, was re-arrested in Orenburg, and has again escaped. Podgorsky, Borodin and another comrade have fled from Vyatka. Borodin was re-arrested 300 versts away from the place he escaped from. It was found out that the "flight" was organized by agents of the Vyatka *Tcheka* who were anxious for promotion. But their calculations did not altogether succeed: the two other comrades could not be found. Podgorsky was arrested, much later, in Petrograd, during the capture of the underground printing office of the Left Social-Revolutionists; he was sentenced to 3 years concentration camp at Suzdal. Tatyana Rayevskaya and Helen Yegelskaya were arrested in Petrograd in connection with the same affair and have been sent for 3 years to Suzdal. The latter of the two women has been suffering from paralysis of the feet, but, in spite of all applications, the *Tcheka* replied cynically that "we had enough worries with sick left S.-R.'s". She has been transferred at last to the prison hospital in Moscow. In Petrograd have also been arrested two of the comrades who had been tried in Moscow in 1922 (left s.-r. trial): Smirnoff and Utkin. Both have been sentenced to 3 years Solovetz.

. . . At the end of April, agents of the *Tcheka* captured the underground printing office of the Petrograd Bureau of the Left S.-R. Party. Sixteen comrades were arrested, among them being Sholom Yerukhimovitch and Paul Surgutzky. They were all despatched post haste to Solovetz. They were not allowed any visits from relatives, nor have they this right at present. They are not even permitted to correspond or to receive food parcels. It is rumoured that Surgutzky as a sign of protest, attempted to commit suicide while in the Inner Prison of the *Tcheka*. Lydia Surkova is in Ust-Syssolsk. She has no work, starves and suffers from active consumption. Out of the 16 exiles who are there, two only have jobs; one of them (a Right S.-R.) has committed suicide.

From exile, September, 1924.

. . . Ruvim Yerukhimovitch, 50 years of age, old party worker, having tasted the Tzarist "katorga" (Schlüsselburg and banishment to Irkutsk) is, since 1920, being driven from one Bolshevist place of exile to another. He spent about a year in Askhabad; in total despair at his inability to find work, he asked to be transferred to Tashkent (where one of his sons is in exile). But it was in vain that he looked there for work during 5 months (he is a leather worker and a specialist in his line). He had to live, with his wife and children, literally in the streets. As a result, his tuberculosis grew worse, while his leg had to be operated upon. He has now been sent back to Askhabad.

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Another son of his, Leo Yerukhimovitch, has been banished to Ust-Kulom, a lonely spot, 1,000 versts away from any railway. His brother, Sholom Yerukhimovitch, is languishing in the Lenin "katorga" (Czarist term for hard labor)—the Solovetz Islands.

The Left S.-R. Martzynkevitch, who was on the Solovetz Islands, fell ill with cancer of the womb. An operation became urgent and she asked to be transferred to Moscow. This was refused. She then declared a hunger-strike. After a 15-days' strike, she was given the assurance that she would be transferred to Moscow. She stopped her strike. Six days passed, and nothing was heard of the promise given her. She then began again her strike and hunger-struck for 16 days more. After this, she was transferred to Suzdal; from there she was brought, totally ill and with an almost fatal attack of hemorrhage, to the Lefortovo prison hospital (Moscow). The doctors found her state hopelessly bad.

. . . It is not only men with settled political convictions who go to-day to prison and exile, but also young boys and girls who belong to no parties, for the sole reason of an acquaintanceship, or for the reading of a pamphlet and the like.

The 18-year old schoolboy Klyutshitzky has been sentenced to 3 years Solovetz or Suzdal, because a copy of "Sozialistitchestny Vestnik" ("Socialist Messenger") was found in his room.

The 17-year-old schoolboy Chervonenko is permanently banished to Obdorsk (Northern Siberia, 700 versts from the railway) for having lived in the same room with the above.

The 18-year-old, non-party, schoolgirl Maria Butshenkova, is sent to Narym for three years (she is a consumptive girl, too) because a copy of the "Bulletin of the Central Bureau of the Left S.-R. and Maximalist Party" was found in her room. P. Davydova, 22 years, non-party, has been sentenced to 3 years exile for having visited the Left S.-R. Club.

From a Letter Written by G. A. N., Moscow, June 2, 1924:

. . . Yurko has been banished to Ust-Kulom, 27 versts from Ust-Syssolsk, on the river Vytshegda. In the Zyrian language Ust-Kulom means: "The Gates of Death." This is what he writes: "The village deserves that name. A hole, a gap in human culture. The village is not marked on any map. . . No possibility of obtaining even baked bread. . . There are 5 exiles in Ust-Kulom. . . .

From a Letter Dated Moscow, April, 1924:

On March 22, 1924, Michael Lichtenbaum, former member of the Central Committee of the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party of Lithuania and White Russia, was cruelly beaten, ill-treated and tortured

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(compression of sexual organs, hairs torn out of his beard). The torturing was carried out by the famous hangman Ryba. On the way to the Commandant's office, Lichtenbaum shouted: "Long live the Left Socialist Revolutionary Party! Shame to the executioners!" For this he was again beaten. The fact that he was tortured was fully confirmed by the *Tcheka* doctor. As a protest, Lichtenbaum declared a "death" hunger-strike, without putting any demands. On the eighth day of his hunger-strike he was to have been taken to Kostroma. Twice he attempted to commit suicide. On the eleventh day of his hunger-strike he was taken by force to the psychiatric hospital where he is at present, although the doctors found him mentally normal.

M. Lichtenbaum was arrested in Moscow on October 23, 1923 and was sentenced to 3 years concentration camp. After a 12-days' hunger-strike he was brought to the Suzdal hard labor prison. Because of his participation in the protest against the massacre of Socialists in the prisons—the hunger-strike of February 10—he was brought, a sick man, under the pretext of an operation, to Moscow—"for a cure." It is during this period that he fell in the hands of the torturers. He hunger-struck for 23 days during his six months' imprisonment. His health is now threateningly shattered.

From a Letter Written by K., from CH., August 30, 1924:

The struggle for one's existence sucks out an enormous amount of strength and energy. . . I have unfinished reminiscences of the period 1914-17, and an unfinished sketch on the Paris Communie. . . We look with horror upon the fast approaching autumn and upon the imminence of a long winter lethargy. . . .

From a Letter Written by P. from Troitzk, 1924:

. . . A student, sent out from Moscow, has lately committed suicide, while a few days ago a 30-year-old fellow, who had left this place a short time ago, has shot himself. . . . Had we had statistics, what a number of such victims of reaction could be counted over the length and breadth of the "Socialist" fatherland. I can just imagine the picture of a landslide in a mine in which workmen become asphyxiated, being cut off from the outside air. And now one, now another, out of despair, would kill himself, having no strength to await either salvation or inevitable death. . . .

From a Letter Written by G. U., exiled to Chardyn, Sept. 3, 1924:

. . . . I am accused, under Section 223 of the Criminal Code, for having had a walk along the river Kama and having gone into a village 4 versts distant from Ussolye. . . As there is no notice as to the radius in which we have a right to move, it seems that we cannot even go out in the woods. . . .

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From a Letter Written by G. U., exiled in Ch., October, 1924:

. . . The situation in the provincial prison is as follows: (1) all kinds of prisoners are kept together; (2) food in common dishes; (3) walks nominally for 15 minutes, actually 5; (4) overcrowding—15-20 persons in a space that could hold only 3; (5) anti-sanitary conditions —filth, stench, parasites, black-beetles, spiders, wood-lice, etc.; (6) no windows opened; (7) disgusting food—watery soup and 1 lb. of black bread; (8) rough behavior of wardens. Until 1924, Tchekists were practicing beating and ill-treatment at examinations. (9) absence of newspapers and extreme shortage of books; (10) sleeping on boards; (11) medical attendance insufficient—none at all at night.

For the 10 months of exile, I enjoyed: (1) 2 imprisonments (one of 33 days and one of 7 days); (2) 3 searches; (3) 2 changes of lodgings; (4) 5 calls to the *Tcheka;* (5) Section 223 of Criminal Code for unauthorized departure from fixed place of exile; (6) abuse against myself and my mother who is 70 years old; (8) am completely withdrawn from spiritual life.

STATEMENT SENT BY THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND OF THE MAXILMALIST UNION

(Fall of 1923)

To the Council of People's Commissars, Com. Rykoff:

Two months ago, the members of the Central Bureau of the Union, K. N. Prokopovitch, was exiled from Moscow to Troitzk for having been the technical organizer of the evening in commemoration of Lavroff,* held on June 15, with the permission of the corresponding authorities.

Until now, Prokopovitch is being dragged from one temporary prison to another. He is seriously ill, his teeth are shattered, proving the presence of scurvy.

The Central Bureau insists that you order his immediate despatch to the place fixed for his banishment.

Moscow, September, 1923. G. NESTROYEV, Secretary.

STATEMENT SENT BY THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF THE UNIONN OF THE LEFT SOCIALIST-REVLUTIONARY PARTY AND OF THE MAXIMALIST UNION

(Fall of 1923)

To the Council of People's Commissars, Om. Rykoff:

The member of the Union, J. V. Braun, is being exiled by administrative order, to a concentration camp for 3 years for having

*Famous revolutionary writer of nineteenth century.

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spoken at a meeting in commemoration of Lavroff, held on June 15, and authorized by the corresponding authorities.

Such a draconian sentence for a speech, the main points of which were ratified by the Moscow Department of Public Instruction, has compelled Braun to declare, from to-day, a hunger-strike which, considering his extremely weak state of health, may bring about a fatal ending.

Bringing the above to your notice, the Central Bureau insists that Braun's demands should be given satisfaction so as to avert a tragic end of the hunger-strike—inevitable with a constitution like his.

G. NESTROYEV,
Secretary.

Moscow, September, 1923.

Exiled in 1924

In a letter written by V. T., exiled in Central Asia, under date of January 25, 1924, the writer speaks of the difficulties of finding work and of the endless worries in the struggle for existence.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

From a Letter Written by G. A., Moscow, October 29, 1923:

. . . Yurko has been exiled to Ust-Syssolsk; Izia has been sent for 3 years to the Suzdal concentration camp, together with two railway cars full of menshevists.

The following were arrested in October:

Lydia Golovina, Nina Karpova, Jacob Karpoff, Ivan Petroff, Eudoxia Ignatieva, Rachel Semetitzkaya, and a number of Maximalists among whom are: Dmitrief (Mitritch), Danilin, Nyushenin, Liberman (the latter has been released) . . .

From a Letter Written by G. A., Moscow, October, 1923:

....There are, at present, in the Zyrian district, 45 exiles—Socialists and Anarchists; most of the former are Right Socialist Revolutionists, as the Left Socialist-Revolutionists and the Maximalists are usually sent to the Kirghiz district and to Narym.

. . . The unemployed exiles receive officially 6 rubles 25 kopeks per month from the government. Actually—he gets nothing....

. . . The exile Leo Y. is re-exiled to a deserted little village, Madzha, for the sole reason that a known local Communist, Nevolin, became jealous of Y....

. . . On October 6th, 1923, 14 comrades met at a birthday party. During the evening agents of the "G. P. U." made their appearance; they arrested the whole party and kept them in prison for 4 weeks. The men arrested were first accused of having organized an illegal meeting; this was soon found too absurd and was replaced by a new

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accusation of having organized an anti-soviet commune "Varnak" with the purpose of *saving up strength for the coming anti-Soviet activity!* The local "G. P. U." resolved that "Varnak" (the name of the treasurer of the commune of exiles) was but an abberviation of an illegal organization which it was necessary to annihilate ere it was too late. Not before the arrival of the Procurator from Moscow was the case dropped with the explanation that it was all a result of the illiteracy of the local "G. P. U." agents.

The present-day exiles live much more apart than under the Tzarist régime, owing to the absence of any kind of mutual aid organization. This is due not to indifference on the part of the exiles, but to the repressive measures of the "G. P. U." Thus, the latter arrested in Vyatka 6 men (Studenetzky, Beylin, Parshenevsky and others), sending them to Cheliabinsk hard labor prison for 3 years, and deported 4 others to deserted spots, because these had organized the system of Elders and a mutual aid fund.

Each exile trembles when the last term of his punishment arrives, because the Bolshevists have now introduced new tactics. As soon as your term is over, they arrest you again, and a new order banishes you to a concentration camp or to a much distant corner of the country. Some of them, like the Anarchist Nekhamkes and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary, Irina Kakhovskaya, have been allowed, when their time is up, to live anywhere but in large provincial cities, in industrial centers and in border provinces. One Socialist-Revolutionary exile (a woman) who, after having had small-pox, was almost blinded, has been deported from her place of exile, Vyzenga, to a deserted village, because she was not on good terms with the "G. P. U."

A party of exiles—speculators and "NEP" men—lately reached the Zyrian province. Most of them were left in Ust-Syssolsk, while the 6 Socialist exiles who were brought there, were deported to Ust-Kulim, although many of them had their families with them.

List of Arrests and Exiles†
(Summer 1923)

On the night of the 9th of June, 1923, 41 Anarchists were arrested in Petrograd, and 16 ambushes were set in different flats. Of these 41, 26 were released within the first fortnight. Fifteen remained in prison for seven weeks. Twelve of them received the following sentences:

1. Egor Zenzinov (workman of the "Sskorokhod" factory; old Anarchist; persecuted under the Tzarist regime; consumptive; he is, at present, ill) sentenced to 2 years' banishment to Vyatka.

†Considerable additional material concerning the subject of exile will be found scattered throughout the documents in other sections of the book. Especially are the questionnaires in section V rich in such material.

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2. Shiloff (workman of the "Sskorokhod" factory; old Anarchist; persecuted during the Tzarist regime for active participation in the 1915-1916 strikes; took active part, as Anarchist, in the 1917 revolution) sentenced to 2 years' banishment to the province of Tver.

3. Sokoloff (workman, tiler in the factory formerly known as "Retchkin," Anarchist from 1917; had lately spent 2 years in the Moscow concentration camp for distributing Anarchist literature) sentenced to exile to his native village for 2 years.

4. Gorbitch (metal worker; Anarchist from 1916; deported in 1920 by the U. S. A. authorities for revolutionary propaganda; former member of the Union of Russian Workers of America) sentenced to 2 years' exile to Pyatigorsk.

5. Savitzky (locksmith; old Anarchist; deported in 1920 by U. S. A. authorities; former member of the Union of Russian Workers) sentenced to 2 years' exile to Pyatigorsk.

6. Rodziankin (student of the Petrograd Polytechnic Institute; peasant; Anarchist from 1918) sentenced to 2 years' exile to Yaroslav.

7. Sapeloff (student of the Petrograd Pedagogic Institute) sentenced to 2 years' exile to Yaroslav.

8. Petroff (red army soldier; peasant; became Anarchist after the trial of Anarchists in Petrograd in 1922) sentenced to 2 years' exile to his native village.

9. Ivan Likhatchov (workman in the "Sskorokhod" factory; old Anarchist and, as such, was persecuted under the Tzarist regime; has taken an active part in the 1917 revolution) sentenced to 1 year's exile to his native village in the Vitebsk province.

10. Maria Veger (teacher; Anarchist from 1914; has taken an active part in the 1917 revolution; was arrested, as Anarchist, by the Soviet Power and exiled for 2 years to Arkhangelsk; escaped from there in 1922; very ill at present, suffering from malaria and scurvy) sentenced to 3 years concentration camp in the Solovietzky Monastyr.

11. Simon Fleshin sentenced to be deported abroad.

12. Mollie Steimer (since 1914 in the revolutionary movement; Anarchist since 1918; was, as such, arrested in New York; in 1918, was sentenced by an American court to 15 years' imprisonment for protesting against intervention in Soviet Russia; after having served 2 years of her sentence was deported in 1921 to Russia; arrested twice by the Bolshevists: (1) for helping the imprisoned Anarchists and for corresponding with Comrades abroad, (2) for Anarchist propaganda, sentenced to be deported.

Besides these:

13. Pryanishnikoff (metal worker; old Anarchist, persecuted under the Tzarist regime; actively participated in the 1917 revolution) is, at present, in the House of Preliminary Detention awaiting

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sentence; he declared a hunger strike on August 28, 1923, demanding release; was taken to the Haase Hospital on the seventh day of his hunger strike, and was there artificially fed.

15. Ponomariov (peasant; student of the Petrograd Pedagogic Institute) declared a hunger strike simultaneously with Pryanishnikoff and was also artificially fed; is awaiting sentence in the Provisional House of Detention.

15. Evfim Likhatchoff (leather worker in the factory of the Petrograd United Cooperative Society; has been more than once arrested under the Tzarist revolution; is very popular among the leather workers) is awaiting sentence in the Provisional House of Detention.

Thus, the "Communist" dictators can again declare that the Soviet Government does not persecute Anarchists.

SIMON FLESHIN.

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(Part II)

Stories from Prison

NOTE.—It is very difficult at the present moment to generalize as to the situation with regard to the politicals in jail. As will be seen from the documents in this part and other sections of the book, the political seems still to be subject to arrest without any definite legal rights to counsel, calling of witnesses, public trial, etc. The fact of the matter seems to be that, despite laws, and decrees, he can be arrested, held pretty indefinitely in the "inner" prisons of the "G. P. U.", then held indefinitely in general prisons for politicals, and finally, without any public trial, be sent to a concentration camp, or even continue to be held in prison, or, under the administrative decree, be sent into exile or deported. As yet, since the prisoner has to rely on the willingness of the authorities of their own accord to abide by the provisions of the laws and decrees, and has no power to enforce on them obedience to the laws and decrees (there is, it seems, no provision for habeas corpus), he has to submit to whatever decisions the "G. P. U." or the higher authorities arrive at. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that only a very small percentage of all the politicals mentioned in this book have received any public trial whatsoever, or have had opportunity to consult counsel, adduce testimony or witnesses on their own behalf. As already pointed out, the usual procedure against politicals seems to involve their arrest, their imprisonment in one of the "inner" prisons of the "G. P. U.", under a most rigorous regime, then, after their cases have been investigated, their removal to the politicals' ward in one of the general prisons. Here they are allowed the "politicals' regime", which means more freedom, more courteous treatment by the prison authorities, better food, better quarters than are given the common criminals. However ,this is not always the case, as the numerous hunger-strikes and "obstructions" and suicides attest. Meanwhile, it should be borne in mind that this "politicals' regime", which existed under the Czar's government, was only attained by the politicals in Soviet prisons after a protracted struggle, involving the usual weapons of the political, the hunger-strike, the "obstruction", the suicide of protest, appeals to public opinion abroad through letters smuggled out of jail, etc.

As far as the "inner" (detention) prisons of the "G. P. U." are concerned, it would appear that conditions there are still very bad. (See the questionnaires of the Zionist-Socialists in this section and in section containing the questionnaires). This is in contrast to the conditions in the political wards of the general prisons such as the Butyrky in Moscow, where things have been better, comparatively speaking.

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MARIA SPIRIDONOVA*

February 19. (1919—Ed.)

I think that in court it will be possible for me to pass this on to you. I am therefore writing it for any eventuality.

First, do not be surprised if you find me looking badly and make no deductions from it. I did not have enough food here and the conditions of imprisonment—the lack of fresh air, of heat, of undisturbed sleep—were not very good. The environment is purposely arranged as if for vengeance. . . . .

You will recall that in 1858, in Paris, the bourgeois government invented the Law of Espinasse "About Suspects." The order was given to purge Paris of all "suspects." The purging was executed. A similar order was issued in the provinces. The instruction was to "discover" plots of not less than 10 persons in each province, to involve in these plots the open enemies of the Empire and to put them at the mercy of the Minister. The Minister exiled them to Caen and to other terrible places, without investigation, without trial, giving an account to no one. It was impossble to secure defence, to protest, to appeal. It was a grave. The government of Napoleon III had to terrorize in order to show that it would stop at nothing. It had to break every illusion of justice, of truth, to paralyze all minds by insolently outraging truth, to accustom everybody to such violence, so as to demonstrate its power.

The very same thing is being done by the Government of Lenin & Co.—literally the same. Plots of right socialist-revolutionists and

* The case of Maria Spiridonova is unique in all revolutionary history. Maria Spiridonova, an intrepid girl revolutionist, was outraged and sabered in 1906 by a horde of Czarist cossacks after an attempt to assassinate a general notorious for his cruelty to the peasants. She was condemned to death, but the protests of European public opinion compelled the Czar to commute her sentence to penal servitude in Siberia where she spent 11 years. Released by the Revolution, she returned home like a conqueror. Her party, the Left Socialist-Revolutionists, supported Lenin in November, 1917, and had several portfolios in the Soviet Government until 1918. Then Spiridonova was arrested, but set free after five months in prison. In February, 1919, she was again arrested. The sentence of the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal in her case read: "Not wishing to cause Maria Spiridonova unnecessary suffering . . . the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal resolved to isolate Maria Spiridonova from political and social activity for a period of one year in a sanatorium, affording her the opportunity for normal physical and intellectual work." The present excerpts are from letters written by Spiridonova during that "sanatorium" confinement. The Soviet press at the time claimed that she was hysterical and needed a cure. Spiridonova's own account, although dating as far back as 1919, is reproduced here solely because it is indispensable to a fair estimate of the entire case. The letters by her friend, Madame Izmailovitch, following this letter, carry Spiridonova's story down to June, 1922. Since that time and till quite recently, Spiridonova is supposed to have remained in imprisonment in a villa in a small town near Moscow, Malachovka. Quite recently, however, it has been reported that both she and her friend, Izmailovitch, have been exiled to Turkestan. There has been, however, no documentary proof of this latest development received by the Editor.

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mensheviks are being invented wholesale. While still cooperating with the bolsheviks, I often quarrelled with them furiously, pointing out that these "plots" are lies of hysterical *tchekists*. And later, after we left, these "plots" assumed a mass character. I am now confident that they were invented on purpose, that they were not panicky visions but systematic fabrications. The best proof of this is the latest "plot of the left Socialist Revolutonsts." Even from their own statement of the case it can be seen that there was no such plot. . . .

Send me a thermometer. I get a little worse every day. I should lie in bed, but the bed is frightful; impossible to lie in it with an aching side and back. My side is all sore, as far as the spine. It means that my tuberculosis is developing rapidly. It is a shame that I succumb to it so easily. The bed is made of beams and rough sticks, and is without boards. The so-called mattress is a dirty thin rag through which everything cuts into the body. I tried to put the mattress on the floor and sleep on an even surface, but the stone floor is damp and very cold.

March 4.

"The Case of Spiridonova"

In the newspapers wrapped around a package delivered to me today, I discovered the "Case of Spiridonova," where I read the wording of my sentence, which I heard badly at the time. It was very amusing reading. What brazenness! Bukharin was hooted down by the workingmen at my meeting, and almost put out. Yurenev was silenced at my meetings or permitted to speak a moment amid a chorus of whistling. Smidovitch was allowed to speak 15 minutes, but all the time there was noise. And all these unrecognized leaders of the people and official orators, sticking their pride in their pockets, were my judges in "a court of justice." . . . They could not answer me at public meetings—so they think they can overcome me with prison, trial and the *Tcheka*.

I named there the towns where by foul corruption or through the arrests of the candidates the elections to the soviets were effected. (And Smidovitch, with angelic naiveté, proposes that we fight them in the election campaign after putting us in prison.) I indicated a number of factories in Moscow where the workingmen are subjected to indignities and where the disregard of their will approaches an outrage. And speaking of the ruined peasant economy which is the only thing *that could raise the country and give it bread and Socialism*, speaking of the defiled Soviet Government, of the bespattered and terrorized spirit of the worker and peasant, of the flogged back of the moujik, of the counter-revolution planted in the village by the guardian commissars, I really was "emotional," I cried "with an uninterrupted voice." This hooliganism, this robbery of the people and its sacred revolutionary rights is perpetrated not in the despotic realm

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of Krassnov,* but in that of Lenin and Bukharin, which even now makes a difference to me, hence my "howling." In Krassnov's satrapy I would only act. . . .

I cannot characterize otherwise than "diseased hysteria" the regime which Bukharin and the other "leading soviet figures", whom I have offended and "defamed," have created for me ostensibly to cure me, "without wishing to cause any suffering."

Contemptible hypocrites and Jesuits. . . . In their servile newspapers they cry about Radek chained in a German prison, but do you know the conditions which *they*—Socialists—are creating? I would prefer chains on my feet and arms and neck to my present environment. Just to characterize our Communist Government I will tell everything about it, and not because I cannot bear it.

The Kremlin Cell

On February 15, I suppose for the purpose of the "educational cure" or simply in order to exasperate me, I was transferred to the Kremlin, to the guardhouse. I live in a narrow hole next to the ward where 100 to 130 men of the Red Army are quartered (it is a school of "Red" officers, mostly Communists). One room separates me from the main ward, the filth, noise, rattle, whistlng, wild shooting, clatter and all the rest that goes with a military barracks where the men are on duty day and night. My room is divided into two tiny cells by a board-partition, which does not reach the ceiling and is very narrow, about two and a half to three feet wide.

In my cell there is a window, in the next—it is dark. A resonant stone vault, stone walls nearly three centuries old, and a damp stone floor. Behind the partition are two guards armed with rifles, who every now and then click the triggers. One sentinel is unfailingly at the door, frequently looking into my room. The other pries through a little window-hole cut at another place, and the two of them, together with visitors, (at this moment there are five altogether) are constantly glued to the window and the holes, greedily watching me. This is for me the most fundamental of all evils. In the *Tcheka*, where I spent a day, I had to declare a hunger-strike, as I had no other means of defence against a woman-spy who was planted in my cell. After a quarrel she had had with another spy outside my door, both of them, frightened, naively stared at me without removing their eyes for a moment. In this place I thought it was a temporary evil, that I would overcome it, but it seems to be the system. Whose? Bukharin's, Smidovitch's, or Sverdlov's? I do not know, but it is the system. And like all centralized systems, its origin, of course, is from above. This is the third week now that I am compelled to sleep without undressing, and I am very fatigued. My whole body does

*White Guard, Counter-Revolutionary leader.

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not seem to be mine any more. I cannot wash, I cannot read, write, eat, think calmly, when *uninterruptedly* I am the object of the curiosity of these sleuths. You know what it means generally to me to be an object of curiosity. You know well enough what it is to serve long sentences of penal servitude, but in *this manner* we were not treated even by the servants of the Czar.

"That will do," I sometimes address the spies, "you have stared enough; you ought to be ashamed."

"It's our orders," they reply, sometimes in a confused and sometimes in an insolent voice. . . .

To characterize the hypocritical care of the Bolsheviks about my health I will add a little concerning the externals of my "sanatorium."

There is no stove in my room and it is heated through the partition. It is chilly, of course. And when it begins to get warm, the moisture from the window requires rags to absorb it; the corners of the walls and the ceiling and the floor are covered with wet spots, and the whole cell looks as if painted.

I have fever, of course, all the time, and I am coughing as a result of this dreadful cell and the unaccustomed tobacco smoke which drifts invisibly. I cough from the poisonous gases coming from the stove which is peculiarly constructed.

After the stove is heated, I sit for hours at the table, trying to lie down on my absolutely impossible bed, trying to overcome the throbbing at the temples, the hammering of the heart, and the other consequences of the poison. This is a daily event.

When I applied for open-air exercise, I was refused. When I asked for newspapers, I was refused. With great difficulty I secured soap. Why are no visits permitted?

The sentinel convoys me to the toilet, which harmonizes fully with the general style of my cell and even with the cracked partition here. Behind the door of the toilet the sentinel stands guard. To reach the toilet it is necessary to pass the big hall packed with savagely staring soldiers who immediately dash into the room adjoining the toilet which has large glass doors. So that in addition to practically living in one room with two to four strange men, I have to share generally my life and all its prose with 100 soldiers.

The guards are changed every two hours. Every half hour there is some kind of an additional inspection. They are watching. At night there is the banging of the doors, loud conversation, rattling, and every two hours, every hour, every half hour, somebody looks through the door to see that I am lying here under my coat.

This was never done to me even when I was a penal convict.

And the endless, persistent petty incidents cannot even be told....

Bukharin, Lenin, Trotzky may be satisfied. They are avenged. But they do not understand that such opponents as I they can, if they

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so desire, torture or murder, but not humiliate by petty mockeries. This is shameful and base.

There is no need to say that specific measures of protection against my escape do not at all require such an environment. I was imprisoned by them in a normal jail five months and did not escape. I was in solitary confinement. My Lettish guards always slept at their posts and my windows were open on the court, but I did not attempt to escape. Their confidence in me, their attitude, put me under obligation. . . .

Naturally, there were incidents with individual ruffians who would aim their guns at me. But this does not count. This happened seldom, only 5 or 6 times, and then it was only a threat of death and not a prolonged system of torment of the free spirit of a living human being.

I am writing you all this not in order to alarm you and make you run about the various offices begging and seeking relief. We must not accustom these power-intoxicated functionaries to have anybody crawl before them. . . . We must again begin to fight and win respect for our spirit in prison, we must create traditions. Internationalists such as we, believers in the power of the toilers and not of a single party, will for a long time yet be languishing in the prisons of unprincipled governments of all shades.

March 14.

Transfer to Hospital

March 9 I was transferred to the Kremlin hospital. I was very ill. I became sick in the first days of my imprisonment in that hole, about February 14-15. It was diabolically cold and damp. Then the cell was heated, and it began to thaw and become wet. About March 4-5 I began to cough blood in quantities, resembling the period of 1906-7-8, before I was sabered. I would bend over a stinking receptacle and let the blood stream from me. I was on my feet, because there was a din in my head, and knowing that my condition was bad, I did not want to succumb to it.

One night was especially critical. I awoke with a sensation that the end had arrived. Then it began. The entire pillow, kerchief, towel were soaked with blood. I felt as if I were expiring. Suddenly I sensed that I was no longer the master, that "it" had come. . . .

I called the sentinel to raise me, but found that I had no voice. I tried to knock. But the hand would not obey.

I could not raise my hands to wipe the blood off lips, mouth and cheeks. How long I remained in such a condition I do not know.

At dawn I gathered strength to put myself in order. It was very interesting. The thoughts were so different. There was no indignation at death, which seemed to be present. None at all.

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I recalled everything that I had left undone. And there was such humility in my soul. It was so calm, calm. I was lying and waiting.

I was terribly chilled. Towards morning the sentinels became so alarmed at my appearance that, in spite of all my protests and begging, they telephoned to the authorities and asked for a physician. I had one answer to all the queries: "I want nothing."

The physician, a woman, looking at the gaping wet spots on the walls, and at the whole cell, said: "If you remain here another night, you will die." . . .

Here, in the hospital, I almost recovered. My hands tremble, there is a noise in my head, but there is new strength. Here I lost about 6 to 8 glasses of blood. I would soak the end of my kerchief in the glass of blood, and would have a wonderful, bright, crimson banner.

Here I immediately began to breathe more easily. My physique must be powerful indeed. It will heal, and I will not die.

March 20.

I have been transferred from the hospital to the iron corridor, to an unheated room, papered in dark-red, with a stone vault, and smelling of rust. Upon the insistence of the guards, it was heated once. Otherwise there is no inclination to heat it. I am shivering, of course, but I like the room. The floor is of wood, the cell is long, narrow. One can walk about 10 steps.

Today the measurements of the windows were taken. They are putting in bars. Instead of a sanatorium, therefore, they are converting one of the Kremlin rooms into a prison. How thoughtful.

A HAUNTED SOUL*

(June, 1921)

I was brought to the sickbed of Marusia† from the Butyrki Prison on October 27, 1920, after spending a year in jail.

She was arrested in the night of October 26, while sick with typhus. Boris Kamkov, who was on duty that night at her bedside,

* The author of this and the subsequent letter, Alexandra Izmailovitch, is Spiridonova's most intimate friend. She spent 11 years in Siberia at penal servitude together with Spiridonova, whom she calls familiarly Marusia in these letters. The history of Izmailovitch resembles that of Spiridonova. She too had been sentenced to death under the Czar. Since 1918 she has been in Bolshevist prisons almost uninterruptedly. In 1919 Spiridonova escaped, with the aid of a guard, from her Kremlin "sanatorium," but was again arrested while sick with typhus in October, 1920.

† Russian familiar form of Maria.

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was also arrested. According to him, the raid was carried out on a large scale. Apparently, the exact lodging of Marusia was not known. And before locating her, a number of apartments in the enormous house on Tverskaya 75 were forced open and several women, frightened to death, were routed out of bed with the question: "Are you Spiridonova?" The raiders were armed with bombs and army revolvers, as if attacking a gang of bandits. . . .

I was brought from the Butyrki upon the demand of Boris Kamkov. He was released two or three days later, and permitted freely to visit Marusia at any time of the day or night. The first months our jailers were unusually courteous. No forcible transfers from one place to another were made. Boris, Kakhovskaya and Bogoyavlenskaya were permitted to visit the patient. For about a month we remained in Marusia's house. The guards, about five or six *tchekists*, behaved very correctly, doing their best in order that the patient should not see or hear them. Boris and I never discussed the arrest with Marusia, and she never spoke of it either. Generally she was silent almost all the time, her teeth set, and when she spoke, she did it in a whisper and would be frightened by a loud voice. She was leading her inner deranged life, with its nightmares, outside of reality. But there was one fundamental thing in all her nightmares: the prison, the lack of freedom, the consciousness of the violence perpetrated on her and others. She would see around her now Czarist gendarmes and cossacks, now Leninist *tchekists*. The physicians who called on her would assume the same shape. Whenever Boris and I introduced them to her, we became in her eyes traitors, accomplices of the jailers. . . .

On June 4, when I was preparing to put Marusia to bed after giving her a bath, as she slept much better on such occasions, I was called out of the room by the investigator of the *Tcheka*, Piukenen, who arrived with some other persons, and informed us that we were to be transferred immediately to another place. I explained that a sudden transfer like this, without previously preparing the patient for it, and without the assistance of the comrades whom she remembers and does not fear, might have very bad consequences for her. To my declaration the following answer was made: "I must carry out my order today."

I had to submit to the threat of violence and was compelled to give the patient a large dose of a drug to induce sleep in order to overcome any possible physical resistance on her part. The transfer was of course made in the usual way, by automobile, which alone inspired her with disgust and horror. In the second hour of the night we found ourselves in our new quarters, as I learned the following day, in the Psychiatrical Prechistenka Hospital, in the Shtatny Alley, since last Easter converted into a prison hospital.

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The Psychiatric Hospital and the Hunger-Strike

A damp, apparently long uninhabited room, with the window-frame tightly sealed and the oppressive odor of a cellar, struck us very unpleasantly after our dry and sunny room. The wooden frame of the window was taken by Marusia to be prison bars, and as soon as she entered the room, she began to examine these "bars" and to saw them with her fingers which had not yet healed from "sawing" the frame of her bed at our last place in moments of depression. With the aid of a small penknife, I immediately removed the window-frame and opened the window. But all night she remained up, haunting the room like a shadow.

Outside were trees. Nightingales were singing. Our den, which had been sealed for a long time, was filled with exquisite air laden with the aroma of poplars and birches. Behind the trees glittered the red stars on the caps of the soldiers and *tchekists* sauntering about with rifles or revolvers. Sometimes at night, as well as in the daytime, wild shots would be heard. The first week, from morning to night, an insane inmate nearby cried, sang and cursed. Marusia began to fear the window and the door, and would hide in the darkest corners at the appearance of the physicians.

But this was not her only reaction to the new environment. She absolutely refused to take food and even to drink water. All my persuasion, pleading, scolding, all my tricks (I put food in all the corners of the room) were of no avail. She would not explain why she refused to eat. She only whispered of *tchekists* and gendarmes, whom she saw everywhere about her, behind the door and the window, and even in the room behind the chair and the table.

I was in utter despair. The physicians began to talk about artificial feeding. This would have been her end. What was ailing her mainly was the hatred and horror of violence. Violent feeding would increase it to such an extent that she would not be able to endure it any more physically. Besides, this act of violence would be associated in her mind with all those refined cruelties which she suffered in 1906 at the hands of the Czarist gendarmes and cossacks. I absolutely rejected the proposal of forcible feeding.

Looking for means of saving her, I seized at one thought: Perhaps Boris, who had spent about four months at her bedside, could influence her and make her eat. On June 9, at the end of the fifth day of her *dry* hunger-strike, I wrote to the *Tcheka*, pointing out the desirability of bringing Boris Kamkov. The same evening he was brought from the "Inner Prison" of the *Tcheka*. The patient recognized him and received him well. But—our aim was not achieved.

Obstinately, with the consciousness of a healthy person, she continued to refuse food. On the sixth day she began to grow very weak. She was lying still, her face emaciated, in her eyes a petrified expres-

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sion of yearning and horror, and frequently she would clutch at her heart. She slept from three to four hours daily, her pulse was from 120 to 130, and at the approach of the physicians, who frightened her, her pulse reached 160. I began to apply to her heart day and night a cold wet rag which caused her apparent relief. . . . On the seventh day of the hunger strike (which was "dry," and that frightened us especially) we sent a declaration to the Presidium of the *Tcheka* demanding the only measure which could save Marusia—her immediate release.

Threat of Forcible Feeding

The answer to our declaration was remarkable for its cynicism. The following day I was called out into the court where at a table were seated solemnly two representatives of the *Tcheka*, a woman physician named Feinberg, the investigator Kozlovsky, and several physicans of the hospital. The senior physician read to me a paper signed by Samsonov, a member of the Presidium of the *Tcheka* and invited me to sign it. The document instructed the senior physician to apply artificial feeding to Onufrieva (the *Tcheka* insisted on designating Spiridonova by this pseudonym, so as to conceal her identity from the medical staff, but of course the secret was out from the beginning). The consent of her guardian, Izmailovitch, was required, however, so as to make the latter responsible for any consequences. I did not limit myself to signing my name, but expressed my attitude towards the courtesy of the *Tcheka*.

While I was writing, the *tchekist* physician was conducting around the table a peaceful conversation with her colleagues about an ambulatory and other problems of the day. Suddenly there arose before me the distant, forgotten (I had thought) past: I am in the circular tower of the Minsk Prison, condemned to death. I am reading a newspaper, which reached me in spite of all the prison bars and prohibitions. It is the period of the bloody suppression by the Czarist Government of the Revolution of 1905. Every day the newspapers, on the fourth page, chirped of the theatre, opera, ballet. And the dissonance in the soul from a comparison of the chirping on the one page and the martyrology on the other was such that my soul refused to believe. And now again similar dissonance struck me. Here, a few steps away, a human being is dying whose life all was spent in the service of the Revolution. The functionaries are reading to me, her most intimate friend, her death sentence, courteously inviting me to attach my signature to the effect that, not they, but I, am killing her. While waiting for me to sign, they are discussing indifferently current affairs.

I wrote approximately as follows: the catastrophic condition of the sick M. A. Spiridonova, according to the profound conviction of

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Kamkov and myself, who have observed the entire course of her illness, can be relieved only by a radical change, by freedom, since the fundamental cause of the ailment is her consciousness of violence, of the lack of liberty, of prison life. Forcible feeding will undoubtedly hasten her end and increase her torment in association with the outrages she has suffered at the hands of the Czarist cossacks and gendarmes, who, in her diseased mind, are identical with the *tchekists*. The proposal that I choose between artificial feeding and the alternative, is equivalent to allowing me to determine the method of killing the patient. Rejecting absolutely the method of artificial feeding and selecting the more gradual and less painful alternative, I again emphasize the fact that the death of Spiridonova will be entirely on the heads of the present makers of the destinies of Russia." Verbally I then added my appreciation of the "original kind of liberalism which is bringing us back to the days of Socrates, when the person condemned to be executed had the right of choosing the mode of his death." . . .

On the tenth day of the hunger strike, Boris succeeded in making Maria take two sips of tea. This was the beginning of victory. She began to drink a little, a couple of times a day. But our attempt to give her some tea mixed with the yolk of an egg failed, and only provoked her fury and a refusal to drink at all. We had to be more cautious with our subterfuges.

On the twelfth day of the hunger-strike, June 15, Boris was suddenly taken away from us by trickery. He was called outside, and five minutes later they came to me for his overcoat and cigarettes. As if we would have built a barricade and offered any resistance with a dying person in the room! His sudden disappearance, without a word of farewell, had a depressing effect on Marusia. Two days afterwards she looked for him with her eyes, and called him in a scarcely audible whisper, "Boris, Boris." I could not leave the room for more than a very few minutes, as she would be alarmed lest I too were taken away. The physicians declared her to be at the point of death.

On the fourteenth day, on the evening of June 17, when Marusia seemed completely exhausted, I poured into her mouth, which was half-open, about half a cup of tea containing the yolk of an egg. She swallowed it with her eyes closed. I quickly prepared a similar portion and repeated the operation. Even now I do not know how it happened: whether it was the result of an exhausted will, in connection with the physical collapse of her whole organism, or whether the instinct for life forced its own way by changing her original inner resolution. In all likelihood it was the latter. During the first two days, when she began to take food I had the impression of a struggle going on in her between the old resolution and the new impulse.

Now, as I am writing this, a week and a half have passed since the end of the hunger-strike. I see nothing hopeful for us in the near future. Marusia is almost always in a state of alarm.

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The wild shots which occasionally resound not far from us bring on the thought that in the vicinity people are being executed. She tears forward to help the people supposedly led to execution. And when I hold her back, she reproaches me with being a coward, like all the others around her. If I should let her go, she would stop at no doors and go ahead, until she struck the bayonet or a revolver of a Leninist *tchekist*. I therefore keep her from going. She then tosses about, bruising her hands against the doors until blood flows, and is angry with me. . . . Something unprecedented, something which cries to heaven, is being carried on here. Certainly nothing like it happened either in Hungary or in Denikin's kingdom. Even there a psychically deranged person was never subjected to an outrage like this. In the course of a year there has been going on here the torture of the living soul of a human being, bound hand and foot by sickness, defenseless against any experiments made on her. In a diseased brain prison life, espionage and oppression are multiplied ten-fold and leave their impression with acute painfulness. They know here from innumerable medical examinations and the daily observation by the physicians how seriously ill Marusia is, what a torment imprisonment is to her—and yet they leave her in this environment on purpose. In the stubbornness, which is truly revolutionary, with which Marusia refuses to submit to their oppressions they discern an insult to their power, and are sharply changing the conditions here for the worse. Apparently they really want to achieve the dreadful end, and, with them, it is now only a question of concealing from the world all that is transpiring here. In this respect they are performing miracles of isolation. They like to strangle, but they like to do it quietly. . . . And if the Czarist penal servitude could not destroy her, it will now be successfully achieved.

A. IZMAILOVITCH.

June 29, 1921.

PLEA FOR RETURN TO PRISON

(June, 1922)

In the course of several months, as I have more than once declared to the "Red Cross," the proprietors of the house at Malakhovka, where Maria Spiridonova and I are lodged, have conveyed to us in every possible way their desire to have us leave, the obvious and unquestionable cause of this being the open watch over our house maintained by the *Tcheka* ("G. P. U.") and the calls made on us by its agents, official and disguised.

At the present time the conditions of our life under the same roof with these people have become so embarrassing and our relations so impaired, that our remaining here further would be an oppressive burden. Besides, I have every reason for supposing that agents of

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the *Tcheka* ("G. P. U.") have been planted in our villa as tenants, and that the proprietors themselves have either partly or entirely become agents of the same kind. Marusia, as usual, divined this before I did, and her condition immediately became worse.

An attempt to change our living quarters here would not improve, but, on the contrary, complicate matters, as any kind of moving acts on her in an extremely exasperating manner. The *Tcheka* will create the same conditions everywhere; whether it be in another villa, a Moscow apartment, or a sanatorium, it will plant its agents about us.

My application through the "Red Cross"* that Marusia be permitted to go abroad has apparently, to judge by the silence of the "G. P. U.," this time too been decided negatively. The result is a grave situation from which the best way out, once permission to go abroad is refused, is to be in an *ordinary* prison, where everything is clear and definite, where a jailer is a jailer, a physician a physician, a comrade a comrade, where there are no shams, no lies, no watching from the corner of the eye, no eavesdropping, and none of that terrifying moral atmosphere that distinguished our hospital in the Shtatny Alley, which was a highly refined place of torture for the patient and which Malakhovka is beginning to resemble.

Upon the clearly expressed wishes of the patient, as well as my own convictons, I am addressng ths plea to the "Red Cross" to do everything in its power to secure the transfer of Maria Spiridonova and myself to the Taganka Prison, into the normal environment of our imprisoned comrades with whom we could associate without being watched and without first obtaining permission, all of which would considerably neutralize the depression which the prison bars and the other jail externals would make on the psychically unbalanced patient.

The conditions of our present "freedom" created by the *Tcheka* are much worse than having to report daily to the police and are in no way less a mockery and injury to us, providing the Government only a false reputation for "humanity."

A. IZMAILOVITCH.

June 11, 1922.

KOROLENKO TO GORKY

(June, 1921)

Dear Alexei Maximovitch!**

I want to share my misfortune with you. My younger daughter, Natalia, was married to a very good man, Konstantin Ivanovitch Liachovitch. He was very popular in Poltava, with the workingmen,

* Political Red Cross conducted by Mme. Peshkova.

**This letter to Maxim Gorky (Alexei Maximovitch Peshkov) from his lifelong friend Vladimir G. Korolenko was published together with other Korolenko letters by Gorky.

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too, who knew him since 1905. He was an old revolutionist, was forced to seek refuge abroad in the years of reaction, and lived in France, in Toulouse, where he studied in the University. Then he returned to Russia. Here again he was subjected to persecution under the regime of the Hetman,† and was exiled by the Germans to Brest-Litovsk, upon the instigation of the local authorities of course. After the Revolution in Germany, he returned to Russia and was elected to the Soviet by the workingmen. Well, you know that we now have a "dictatorship of the proletariat," which consists of this, that the representatives of the proletariat must speak under the dictation of Communists. Liachovitch did not belong to the "obedient sheep" and frequently spoke the bitter truth to the authorities, i.e., he voiced just that for which he was elected by the workingmen. He was a menshevist, social-democrat, i.e., he said the very things that Lenin now inscribes in decrees. So, naturally, he was arrested. I warned the president of the *Tcheka* that he was suffering from heart disease and that typhus would be fatal to him and the prison was thoroughly saturated with typhus. That very thing happened. He contracted it by contagion and we buried him on March 17.

One wants to ask: Why did an honest man, a sincere revolutionist perish? Was it for that which Bolshevism is now beginning to embrace, now, that it may already be too late? History will some day take note of the fact that the Bolshevist Revolution has treated genuine revolutionists and socialists to the same regime as the Czarist government, i.e., pure gendarmery methods.

When I ask myself the question: "Why has there been hitherto no social revolution, not only in our country, but anywhere else?" I answer it as follows: "A social revolution would be the highest manifestation of justice." From such a sense of justice we are still far removed. In Europe elements of it already exist. They have already learned to take account there of the opinion of the majority. There it would be considered an obvious absurdity to say that a man can be forbidden to express his opinion. Here this is a fact. At a time when the country needs the highest exertion of mental and moral forces, public opinion is forced to be silent.

Once, some three years ago, I was invited to make a speech at a certain village. I said what was on my mind, and afterwards a sailor said to me: "You know, if you had said that on our front, you would not have escaped with your life!" A people which thinks of its rights in such terms is still far from the order of highest justice. It still has a great deal to learn from those whom it has proclaimed *contemptible bargainers and traitors*,* such as the leaders of German socialism

†Hetman Skoropadsky, the provisional ruler of the Ukraine in 1918, under the German military occupation.

* This is a reference to Lenin's invectives against the Socialist leaders of Western Europe who disagreed with him as to the social revolution.

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like Kautzky. And, instead, we assumed the leadership of the world revolution. Is it any wonder that we committed mistakes that demonstrate only how not to make a social revolution? . . .

Now I wish you all the best. A happy journey, as I heard you are leaving to take a cure. Best wishes.

Your
June 29, 1921. VL. KOROLENKO.

FROM A COMMUNIST
(1924)

After having been imprisoned in Moscow for 20 days, I declared a hunger-strike in order to force a formal indictment and open court proceedings against me, or to secure my liberation. On the tenth day of my hunger-strike (which began on June 1, 1924) the "G. P. U." Commission attempted to subject me to forcible feeding. Everyone familiar with our revolutionary traditions knows how determinedly we always condemned and resisted the attempt to terminate a hunger-strike by force. Even Russian Tzarism resorted to such methods only on very rare occasions.

Only recently the "Pravda" characterized such treatment in Poland as a most barbarous and outrageous procedure. But that seems to refer only to the Polish bourgeoisie. When applied, however, in Tomsk it is not an outrage but the flower of proletarian communistic culture.

Twice I resisted the attempt to feed me forcibly. I continued my hunger-strike—and then the Tomsk prison authorities and the local "G. P. U." acted in a manner that transcends anything done by the Polish executioners and sets a fine example for the Fascisti of the whole world. On the thirteenth day of my hunger-strike, at 2 o'clock at night, they broke into my cell where I lay unconscious, dragged me out of bed, and brought me to an insane asylum.

Indeed, such proceedings are not practiced even by the Fascisti of Poland. They have not gone that far yet, but here the motto is: Whoever protests is crazy and belongs to the insane! Particularly when he is of the working class and has been a Communist for 20 years. The Fascisti do not seem ripe yet for this kind of proletarian ethics.

It is obvious that these tactics are intended to stifle all political opposition. They brought me to Tomsk in order to hide their dark deeds. . . . Vasslov, the chairman of the local court, declared to me: "If we were to act legally, we would have to release you, because your imprisonment is illegal." And another representative of the Government, Mestcheriakov, sought to persuade me: "Recant! Say that you are sorry. It depends upon yourself whether you will be released or remain here."

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By such means my life—and that of my family—is made a constant torture, for they are trying by all provocative means to force me to recant and renounce. . . . I have committed no crime; I maintain it absolutely. The sole reason for my arrest was the fact that I trusted the word of honor of Krestinsky* and Zinoviev (and for that same reason I returned to Russia from abroad). And they sent me to Tomsk because I trusted the word of honor of Menjinsky,† Deribas, Agranov and Slovatinsky. Also because they thought they would get rid of me here with less trouble. And because I have committed no offense, they can bring no charge against me.

When my revolutionary proletarian past, origin, and activities are considered, I am treated more cruelly than any of the counter-revolutionists and common criminals in the whole Tomsk prison. No one is permitted to speak to me, neither prisoners, wardens, nor keepers. Every counter-revolutionist is permitted to have relations with the outer world, but to me it is forbidden. . . . My wife and three childen, the oldest of whom is four years of age, are in administrative exile. Her crime is more serious than mine, for she is my wife. And the babies are exiled too, because they are my children. . . .

Tomsk Prison, 1924. G. MIASNIKOV.

(The foregoing letter belongs to the pen of one of the oldest members of the Russian Communist Party, a workingman by origin, who had suffered much persecution as a revolutionist under Tzarism. He is now in disgrace and therefore in prison because of his opposition to certain policies of the Bolshevist dictatorship. He was first arrested in 1922, and attempts were made to kill him "while trying to escape," but unsuccessfully. After a hunger-strike of 12 days, he was released, but arrested again on May 25, 1923. Later he was permitted to go abroad. Trusting the pledges of inviolability given to him by Krestinsky, the Ambassador of the Soviet Government at Berlin, he returned to Russia where he was seized by the "G. P. U." Previous to his arrests, Miasnikov demanded a relaxation of the dictatorship and the granting of elementary liberties to the workingmen. As far back as 1921, he addressed a letter to Lenin, part of which read as follows:)

I want freedom of speech and press for myself—a proletarian who has been a member of the Party for 16 years, and not abroad, but in Russia. Of the 11 years preceding 1917, I spent seven and a half in prison and at penal labor, during which period I was on hunger-strike 75 days altogether. I was mercilessly beaten, subjected to torture. The remaining three and a half years I was busy escaping. Three times I fled from exile, not abroad, but to continue the work of the Party in Russia. . . . You should know that for such speech

*Soviet Ambassador in Berlin.
†Menjinsky was an official of the *Tcheka.*

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as I am indulging in at present, hundreds, even thousands of workers are imprisoned. If I am free, it is because I have been a Communist for 16 years, my Communist beliefs having been formed as a result of suffering, and because the masses of the workers know me. . . .

G. MIASNIKOV.

LENINGRAD JAILS

(The Inner Prison of the "G. P. U.," known as the Gorohovaya and the Shpalerka House of Preliminary Detention, and other prisons in Leningrad).

"GOROHOVAYA" AND "SHPALERKA"*
(1922-23)

. . . Each arrested Socialist finds himself invariably in the Gorohovaya which plays the role of a kind of purgatory.

At the bottom of the yard, in a building which, under the Czarist regime, was used for the City Governor's guard and in which were kept under arrest policemen administratively punished, are to be found, at present, the cells of the "G. P. U." These occupy 5 flats. The third floor contains the "Second Ward of Solitary Cells," the fourth and fifth have the "First Ward of Solitary Cells" and the "Common Cells" for men and women. . . . In accordance with the degree of guilt, the prisoner is either thrown into the common cell (where there are always from 40 to 100 men) or into a solitary cell.

There is so very little space that, in some cells, there is no room to lie full length on one's board. The walking to and fro in one's cell is, of course, altogether out of the question. A dim electric (carbon) lamp is fixed flush into the ceiling; switching it off at night is forbidden. It is impossible to read by such light; yet that lamp has a deleterious action on the eyes which are deprived of any chance of resting from the tomb-like illumination and which do not see daylight for a month or over.

Although enough stories of the "Gorohovaya" are current, the first impression produced by the solitary cell was most fantastic. One recalls, instinctively, to one's mind the mediæval prisons of the "holy inquisition" or, still better, the extraordinary stories of Edgar Poe about people buried alive, etc. This impression of the fantastic is rendered more gruesome by the picture of men's heads sticking out of portholes cut out in the cells' doors. . . . A "good" warden was on duty and while I was led to "my" cell, I saw a dozen of these unkempt and unshaved, worn-out faces, sticking out of the little open-

*This account of the prisons of the "G. P. U." in Petrograd is vouched for by the Berlin delegation of the Socialist-Democratic Labor Party of Russia (Menshevik). The accounts that follow, by Shabalin, Mollie Steimer and Fleshin seem to corrobrate this account. This account covers 1922 and 1923.

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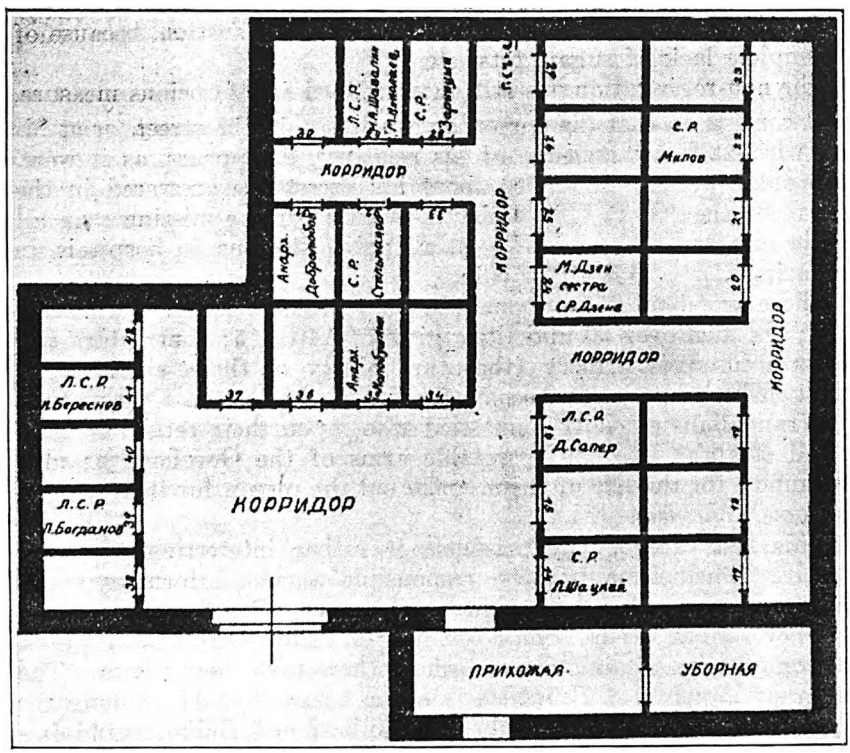
ings in the doors, reminding one of those Chinese criminals whose heads are jammed in a board. The picture can never be forgotten. The air, in these solitary wards, is very stuffy, as the ventilation is almost non-existant, while the density of the prison's population is always excessive. How one envied the punished policemen of the "good old times"! In those days, under the old regime, the Second Ward was occupied by 6 to 8 men; now there are 24. The policemen were kept (by administrative order) from 7 to 14 days; now the period of preliminary detention (before being sent to exile) lasts 1, 2 or 3 months.

A further, closer acquaintance with the prisoners' regime in the Gorohovaya brought nothing "disappointing" with regard to the first impression.

The prisoners in the Gorohovaya have no walks. Reading is absolutely prohibited. Even newspapers used as packing paper are



(Original drawing of this diagram was made in prison by the Left Socialist-Rovlutionist Shabalin and sent out to friends.
Diagram shows cells and names of politicals that occupied them, among them Shabalin, north-western part.)

DIAGRAM OF THE TCHEKA PRISON IN PETROGRAD, KNOWN AS THE "GOROHOVAYA", BECAUSE SITUATED ON THE STREET OF THAT NAME

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taken away. This transforms detention in the Gorohovaya into a real torture. In addition, the politicals are kept together with the common law criminals. Filth, mice, bugs in infinite numbers.

The organ of "proletarian dictatorship" considers, apparently, these conditions as being, generally speaking, much too "mild"; supplementary tortures are applied to some prisoners.

Two of these supplementary tortures are to be especially mentioned: the withdrawal of the right to receive food parcels, and the non-registration. Both these measures surpass, by their Asiatic cruelty and refined tyranny, all that had to be gone through by a Russian revolutionist in the vilest Czarist prison.

First measure: the withdrawal of the right to receive food parcels is nothing else but a torture by starvation. The whole ration given to a prisoner amounts to 1 lb. of bread and two meagre muddy soups, not always palatable; the prisoners could only keep up their health by receiving food parcels and clothes from home. The withdrawal of this right condemns him to a slow but sure exhaustion, because of the complete lack of sugar, fats, etc.

The non-registration is a still more refined and ferocious measure. It consists in that the person arrested, say, in the street, or at his office, without the knowledge of his relatives, disappears, as it were, to the outer world. Inquiries about his arrest are answered in the negative by the "G. P. U." Relatives search for the missing man all over the city and make inquiries at all police stations, in hospitals, in mortuaries. . . . But all in vain.

There are about 250 prisoners in the Gorohovaya. It is a motley crowd; old men over 50 and little girls of 14 to 15; contractors and officials accused of bribery (there are plenty of these, as the fight against bribery has lately become the fashion); former Kronstadters and Wrangelians officially amnestied who, upon their return to Russia, fell straight into the hospitable arms of the Gorohovaya; men who cannot, for the life of them, make out the reason for their arrest; then come *Tchekists.*

This last category of prisoners is rather interesting. Among them are Tchekist-magistrates, responsible agents, informers, spies. They are in prison for drunkenness, debauches, often for provocation and other similar deeds. Some are just finishing their 2 to 3 weeks' imprisonment by administrative order, others take their places. The number of imprisoned *Tchekists* is never below 8 to 12 (among the *Tchekists* imprisoned in December was to be found Baiko, examining magistrate in social-democratic cases who was accepted as member of the Russian Communist Party immediately upon his release).

Surrounded by such a mixed crowd, it is necessary to be always on one's guard and never enter into any conversation with any one of them. The organ of "proletarian dictatorship" has a special predilecton for the method of "distributing" its agents-provocateurs who,

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under the cover of being a "comrade in misfortune" try to provoke the arrested comrade to a heart-to-heart talk, the exact report of which is forwarded to the examining magistrate.

The very atmosphere of the Gorohovaya cells, whether common or solitary, stuffy and foul as it is, seems to be soaked through with filth and provocation. This heavy sensation calls out a feeling of disgust, aversion and contempt after "acquaintance" with the *Tchekist*-magistrates—bosses of the Gorohovaya. . . .

As mentioned above, the Gorohovaya was but the first step in the life of an arrested Socialist. The time spent in the Gorohovaya is 1 to 2 months, and sometimes longer, if the preliminary enquiry demands it. After this, the "accused" is transferred to the "Shpalerka" (House of Preliminary Detention) where he spends another period of 1, 2, 3, 6 months, a year, and longer—often without any accusation having been presented at all.

The Shpalerka and Its Hunger-Strike

This transfer to the Shpalerka is a real holiday for the prisoners. At last they leave the "Socialist" isolator, wholly unsuitable for detention, and come into a "real" prison left over, with all the prison's "comforts," from the good old times.

The special rules passed by the Provincial Executive of Soviets in December, 1920 mention with foresight that "all the members of Socialist and Anarchist organizations whose cases are considered by the Section of the *Tcheka* attached to the Socialist parties, are to be lodged in special political corridors (for men and for women), detached and apart from the other prisoners."

After a long and stubborn struggle, repeated hunger-strikes and relentless demands, the politicals from the Shpalerka had gained a series of "rights" and "privileges" ratified by a special agreement signed by the "G. P. U." These include—a 2-hours' walk, the right to elect one's Elder and Librarian, and the "socialist" ration consisting of: 70 lbs. of bread, 2 lbs. of sugar, 2 lbs. of butter. . .

As a worthy heir to the *Tcheka*, the "G. P. U." is everywhere and, true to its principles, it cannot calmly stand by; it does all it can to cut down and to render unworkable the "prison constitution" conquered by the prisoners.

By a curious forgetfulness of the prison officials, about 50% of the socialist prisoners were lodged among the common law criminals. In spite of the never-ceasing stream of protests, the right of regular visits from relatives was shamelessly violated; the rights of Elders were suddenly curtailed. . . . As a result of this, a ceaseless, arduous and enervating struggle was continually taking place between the prisoners and the "G. P. U." The only means left, under such conditions, at the disposal of the prisoners, was the hunger-strike.

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The hunger-strikes in the "socialist" Preliminary House of Detention have become chronic. No Czarist prison has ever known such a stream of never-ending hunger-strikes. Here are data about the more important hunger-strikes in the first half of 1922 in the men's corridor (these data were collected in the Archives of the Elders of the Men's Political Ward):

Of 112 prisoners (total number), 43 men (38%) had hunger-struck for various periods. In other words, two prisoners out of every five Socialists in the Men's Ward had passed through a hunger-strike. All the hunger-strikes lasted 226 days, i.e., an average of 5 days for each prisoner. . . .

Here are methods by which the "socialist wardens" fight against hunger-strikes: The Anarchists Prushtshuk, Kolossoff, Korotkoff and Lobe had declared, at the end of November 1922, a hunger-strike, demanding their release. After a few days' hunger-strike, the authorities of the House of Preliminary Detention transferred them to the Haase Infirmary *to be forcibly fed.* They were placed there in a ward with a temperature at freezing point. With a view, no doubt, of increasing the sufferings of the hunger-strikers through the cold, all their clothes were taken away from them in spite of their protests and they were given, in exchange, some underclothing and a thin blanket. It was so cold that the Anarchists arranged themselves in twos and used the mattresses as blankets; but even this could not warm them. In addition, the co-inmates of this ward were syphilitics and suffered from other infectious diseases.

The doctor advised them to give up at once their hunger-strike. Upon the Anarchists' refusal, he called his assistant, told him to fasten them to their beds while he would introduce food with a catheter.

To continue the hunger-strike under these conditions was physically impossible. The regime of the "Haase Infirmary" would twist the most obstinate hunger-striker.

Yet, prisoners often resorted to hunger-strikes. This is quite comprehensible under the conditions of that bacchanalia of senseless arrests and trialless verdicts which are so characteristic of the modern "revolutionary class justice." Here are two typical declarations in connection with hunger-strikes:

"To the Presidium of the 'G. P. U.', from the workmen of the Sestroretzk rifle factory Matveyeff, N. I., Akhropotkoe, V. I., Yermolayeff, A. D., Issayev, V. V., Alexandroff, A. N., Venediktoff, N. K.

"We, workmen of the above-named factory, are deeply indignant at the absence of any answer to our declaration of Nov. 22, 1922, addressed to the Presidium of the 'G. P. U.' and to the examining magistrate Osolin (who has already been in possession of a statement of ours referring to our 3 months' detention in the House of Preliminary Detention, also left without answer). We can only see in this an act of abuse against us. Having thus, definitely decided to give up

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further troublesome applications and free our families who suffer through us and more than we do ourselves, we have emphatically resolved: 'death or freedom.' We may as well add that we have no intention to sit any longer because of our 'well-wishers' (this refers to the informers). We, therefore, declare on the morning of Nov. 28, 1922 a *death hunger-strike.*

"The workmen of the Sesstroretzk rifle factory.

(Signatures.)"

Second declaration:

"To the 'G. P. U.'—to the Chief of the 1st Special Section Shmitkoff; House of Preliminary Detention, cell 198, Smirnoff, N. I.:

"Having read the decision of the 'G. P. U.' of Oct. 18, 1922 to banish me to Vologda province, Yarensk district, for counter-revolutionary activities, for the period of 1 year, I declare most emphatically to the corresponding institution of the proletarian power that I have never manifested any counter-revolutionary activities and, not having belonged to any political party, could not manifest any such activity. As an honest workman, I worked on the land and fed my family of 4 souls: an invalid wife and three children of whom the oldest is 6 years of age.

Taking the above into consideration, this year of banishment is equivalent to my death, as I am a father of minor children who, without my help, are doomed to a death from cold and starvation. I demand to be released. If I receive no reply by Nov. 1, I declare a *death hunger-strike.* (Signature)."

Apart from these hunger-strikes for release, there are series of hunger-strikes demanding a certain minimum of rights for the political prisoners.

Such was the hunger-strike declared by over 50 prisoners, demanding: (1) a ten-days' notice before deportation; (2) despatch to the place of exile by direct route; (3) regular visits. Then there was a three days' strike (13 men) of protest against barriers being placed between prisoners and their relatives at visits and against the search of the persons of visitors who had come to see their imprisoned relatives on July 6.

Then came the protest hunger-strikes against the shooting into windows for looking out (Aug. 23), against the banishment of a sick comrade (S.-R. B.) who had to undergo an operation and who wished to recover his health which was broken down by many years prison in the St. Peter-St. Paul fortress, in Kresty, etc. (under the Czarist regime). . . . .

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AFFIDAVIT

MOLLIE STEIMER. Born Nov. 1897., Dunaovtzi, Ukraine
ANARCHIST*
(1923)

(Refers to experience up to time of deportation in September, 1923)

Coming from the station at 12 A. M., Nov. 1, 1922, I found my room locked up and watched by two soldiers and one agent of the "G. P. U." dressed in civil clothes. The last inquired my name, and then told me that I am under arrest, and must come with him to the headquarters of the "G. P. U." The house was full of people who were detained though they were all patients who came to the doctor (in whose house I occupied a room) for medical aid. Not only they, but even two professors that visited the doctor's daughter who was seriously ill, were kept as prisoners for 3 days together with the others.

On the second day of my arrest I was called before the agent Shmitkov. To his questions I refused to answer but demanded to know why I was arrested. "You are accused of participating in an underground organization which is rendering aid to the imprisoned Anarchists and of having connections with Europe and America," he replied. "How do you come to call the Society which aids the imprisoned Anarchists, an 'underground organization'?" I asked. "Only several days ago, I visited the 'G. P. U.' on behalf of Comrade Nicolaev. Our society had delegated to you Tatyana Palozova, Fleshin,

* The writer of this and the following affidavit is a young American girl convicted and sentenced in America to fifteen years imprisonment in 1918 for distributing leaflets protesting against American intervention in, and blockade of, Soviet Russia. She was finally deported to Russia after serving three years of her sentence in this country. A dinner was given in her honor. Miss Steimer could not herself be present, as she was detained in close confinement on Ellis Island. However, a spokesman of Soviet Russia was present and paid a very feeling tribute to Miss Steimer and read us the special document which had been made out officially welcoming Miss Steimer to Soviet Russia as a revolutionary who had merited well of the revolution. This document was to be Miss Steimer's passport and visa into Russia. At the time there were some notes of disagreement sounded by some just returned from Russia who stated that they doubted if Miss Steimer would find the Soviet Government more hospitable than that of America.

The leaflet for the distribution of which Miss Steimer was imprisoned in America contained, among others, the following statements: "The tyrants of the world fight each other until they see a common enemy—Working-Class Enlightenment. As soon as they find a common enemy they combine to crush it.

"In 1815 monarchic nations combined under the name of the 'Holy Alliance' to crush the French Revolution. Now militarism and capitalism combined, though not openly, to crush the Russian Revolution.

"What have you to say about it?

"Will you allow the Russian Revolution to be crushed? You; yes we mean you, the people of America!

"The Russian Revolution calls to the workers of the world for help."

(From "Sentenced to Twenty Years Prison", published in 1919 by the Political Prisoners' Defense and Relief Committee, New York City.)

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MOLLIE STEIMER
Anarchist girl deported from the United States in 1921. Deported from Soviet Russia in 1923.

VERA ARKAVINA

Vera Arkavina, Aged 24. Member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Secretary of the Moscow Committee of the Party. Repeatedly arrested. Last time in Moscow, June, 1922. Sent to Solovki. Beaten up, together with other politicals, on the way to Solovki, in Kem. As a result, took ill with cancer of the breast. Was operated on, and one breast cut out. Participated in several hunger strikes. The last one in order to join her husband, A. Levine, who was sent to Turkestan. Now together with her husband in Suzdal.

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and myself countless times on behalf of different comrades, and you always accepted us as delegates of a *known organization.* Why do you suddenly call it underground, and consider it counter-revolutionary?" Instead of a reply, he changed the subject and asked how it was that I should correspond with such counter-revolutionists as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Naturally, a discussion began about the meaning of the words "counter-revolutionary." But the man is so narrow-minded and one-sided, that I saw no sense in discussing with him and left the room.

Shortly afterwards, I was taken to the house of Preliminary Confinement. We were 29 Anarchists arrested this time, and though we were all taken to another prison, yet we were certain that we will soon be free and that our arrest is due to the fact that the great holiday—November 7th—had to be celebrated. . . .

However, on the third week of our imprisonment that same Shmitkov handed me over (in written form) the following sentence: "Mollie Steimer, two years exile in Obdorsk, Siberia." Comrade Fleshin received the same sentence. We immediately sent a statement to the "G. P. U." declaring a hunger strike as a protest against such action and demanding freedom. The strike began on the 17th of November and on the 18th at 8 P. M. we were released on the following conditions: Not to leave Petrograd and to call upon the "G. P. U." within 2 days. There we were asked to give a written statement that we will not carry on any Anarchist propaganda. This we refused to do. We were then told that we may soon be sent to Siberia, or, if we agree, we will be provided with the necessary documents to go to Europe.

At that time, some French Anarcho-Syndicalists who were delegated to Russia to attend the International Congress of the Red Trade Unions, learned about this case, and questioned Lozovsky about the banditism that I and Fleshin are guilty of. They have also written a letter of protest to Trotzky. As a result of their intercession, we were not troubled by the "G. P. U." for several months time.

Second Arrest

July 9, 1923, 1 o'clock at night, I was aroused by steps and loud voices in the corridor and before I could comprehend anything, there was a sharp knocking at the door. To the question who is it, came the reply that Steimer and Fleshin are wanted by the "G. P. U." As the door was opened 7 men rushed in wild fashion, pointing their revolvers at us. They ordered us both to lift our hands up. We were searched, then told to show the place we occupy. After searching the small room for 3 hours, they picked up some of the books and pamphlets which are legally sold even in the Russian book stores. Then the head of the gang, Ivanov, read to us the order of our arrest. We

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were taken to the inside prison of the "G. P. U.," Gorohovaya Street No. 2.

On the 11th of the same month, I was questioned by Ivanov:

Q. You are an Anarchist?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know Maria Veger?

A. I refuse to answer.

Q. Do you know Alexey Alonetzky?

A. I refuse to answer.

Q. Maria Veger reads lectures on Anarchism before groups of students, is it not so?

A. I refuse to answer.

Q. You are having Anarchist gatherings?

A. I refuse to answer.

Q. Have you been to the Government Engineering School on Sadovaya Street on July 3rd?

A. Yes, I was there.

Q. What did you do there?

A. I inquired about the text books belonging to Marcus Kamchi; he is now under arrest and he wants his books so that he could continue his studies.

(Afterwards I found out that because of my visit to this school, one young student, Petrov, was arrested on suspicion of having connection with Anarchists. He was expelled from school and sentenced to two years exile.)

We were kept in the "inside" prison for 4 days. They were dreadful days and nights. Those tiny bits of dark holes which are called cells there, are actually full of insects: lice and bed-bugs. All the while one is forced to scratch and pick. . . . I thought I'd go mad. I never slept during these 4 days and 4 nights we spent there. Finally we (I say "we" because at that time we were 41 Anarchists arrested and all were kept in the "inside" prison) decided to use every possible means and force them to remove us from there. We all sent statements demanding immediate removal and threatened to make an obstruction should our demand be ignored.

At last we were taken to the House of Preliminary Confinement. There the politicals were separated from the criminals and kept in different conditions. The few improvements the politicals enjoyed, were first won in 1921 after a 10-days' hunger-strike. However, the government tries every now and then to take back the few privileges.

Thus, when I was brought to this prison I was placed in the criminal corridor and in criminal conditions, which are as follows:

At 8 A. M. a cup of hot water and one pound of bread.

At 10 o'clock 15 minutes recreation.

At 12 o'clock a cup of watery, grayish-looking, stinking soup and

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a piece of meat which is so hard and smells so badly that it is impossible to eat it.

At 6 o'clock we had the same meal as that at 12.

Visits lasting 15 minutes could be obtained only through special permissions.

The improvements the politicals won were:

(1) Two hours recreation;

(2) The right of visits with relatives;

(3) The use of the prison library twice a week.

(4) The right to have one person who would represent the politicals before the "G. P. U." Also the food was somewhat better.

On the 21st of July, I was called for a "hearing." It was in the office of the prison. Again I found myself before Ivanov.

"You are accused of working in an underground organization and of having connections with Europe, under Section 60" (Criminal Code). Saying this, he handed me the accusation (in written form). "Sign here," he commanded. I refused to sign and asked for a more clear explanation. "You are having gatherings with workers and students where you are carrying on Anarchist propaganda."

"Can you prove this ?" I asked.

"No, not exactly, but we have enough grounds to suspect that."

"Will you try us?"

"Nothing of the kind," came the sharp reply. "Your case will be sent to Moscow and that's all."

"Why do you keep me in criminal conditions?"

"Because there is an order from Moscow to cease giving more privileges to politicals than to criminals. Secondly, you must be isolated from the others."

The Inevitable Hunger-Strike

After this conversation, I sent a statement to the "G. P. U." demanding political conditions. On the 26th of July, I received a note of refusal signed by Zbrnev, a member of the Presidium of the Petrograd "G. P. U." While having my 15 minutes recreation in the yard, I noticed a familiar face through one of the windows. It was Maria Veger. She too was kept in criminal conditions. For exchanging a few words with her, the prison administration started up a terrible noise. From all sides the keepers came running as if something extraordinarily terrible happened. I was taken back to the cell and threatened with the dark hole if I ever dared to speak to another prisoner. It was impossible to stand such treatment any longer, and on the 27th of July I declared a hunger-strike, demanding political conditions. Maria Veger also began hunger-striking for the same demands. Lida Surkova, L. S. R. Zal Banzino, non-partisan, and S. Fleshin, Anarchist, joined us.

On the third day of the strike, Ivanov entered my cell, saying:

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"You will be given the right of visits and political conditions in general, but we cannot give the same to Maria Veger."

"Why," I asked in astonishment, "we are both here on the same charge?"

"Because she is a criminal," he answered. "She was sentenced to 2 years exile in Archangelsk and escaped from there before even 6 months had passed." (In 1921 Maria Veger was arrested as an Anarchist. The charge against her was "counter-revolution" because Anarchist literature was found in her room. She spent 3 months in the Moscow prison, in the Butyrki, and got sick with scurvy there. She was sentenced to two years exile in Archangelsk, where she again spent 6 months and finally succeeded in walking away from that damnable place).

Naturally, I became very indignant listening to such ridiculous statement made by a representative of the Bolshevist government, and reminded him of the countless rebels who escaped from prison as well as exile and how happy all right-thinking men and women are when such an escape is made successfully. I mentioned the names of the highest Bolshevist leaders who escaped from various prisons, and told him that if she, Maria Veger, is a criminal because she escaped from exile, then certainly the most idolized Communists at the head of the government are all criminals. He then slammed the door, and I never saw him again.

I was locked up in the cell without anybody interfering with me. Each day the nurse passed by, and looking in through the hole in the door, she inquired how I was. Besides the prison trusty, who asked whether I want some hot water, whenever he passed by, the keeper peeped in—through the hole—every now and then, and that was all.

On the 3rd of August the head doctor entered my cell. I was then unable to walk and there was a terrible evil odor coming from my mouth. I was so weak that I had difficulty in lifting my hands or head and could not keep my eyes open. He examined me and said: "You can hold out one more day, and if you do not take any food until tomorrow, we shall take you to the hospital and feed you forcibly." As a result of his report to the "G. P. U.," Zbrnev came the next day, and gave in to our demands.

The Sentences

Twenty-two days later (August 26) this same Zbrnev came to the House of Preliminary Confinement, and read the sentences to 15 Anarchists (cf the 41 who were arrested 26 were released.) The rest were suspected of carrying on Anarchist propaganda and were sentenced, *without trial*, to various terms of exile. The sentence of Fleshin and myself, read: "To be expelled from the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic for ever."

September 26th, Kolosov—agent of the "G. P. U."—gave us the

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passports and tickets to board the ship which left Petrograd Sept. 27, 1923, for Stettin, Germany.

(*Signature*) MOLLIE STEIMER.

Certified before the Mayor of Drancy (Seine), France.
Jan. 10th, 1925 (Seal and signature of Mayor)

STATEMENT BY MOLLIE STEIMER

(Covers material till deportation, September, 1923)

Russia of today is a great prison where every individual who is known not to be in full agreement with the Communists is spied upon and booked by the "G. P. U." (*Tcheka*) as an enemy of the government. No one can receive books, newspapers, or even a plain letter from his relatives without the control of the censor. This institution which keeps the people in absolute ignorance of all news detrimental to the interests of the Bolshevists is now better organized and more strict than was the famous Black Cabinet under Czar Nicholas II.

The prisons and concentration camps of Moscow, Petrograd, Kharkov, Odessa, Tashkent, Vologda, Archangel, Solovki, and Siberia are filled with revolutionaries who do not agree with the tyrannical regime enforced by the Bolsheviks. The inhuman treatment that those people receive at the hands of their jailers can have only one purpose: that is, to wear them out physically and mentally so that their lives may become a mere burden to them.

To mention a few instances within my *personal knowledge*:

Maria Korshunova, a young Anarchist, while under arrest in Petrograd, was continually dragged from one jail to another. At the end of 1922 she received a sentence of ten years' solitary confinement, and was taken from Petrograd to the Moscow jail where she was supposed to serve her sentence. But she had not been there a month when she was suddenly carried off to Cheliabinsk, Siberia. Here our young comrade thought she would be let alone for a time. But no sooner had she received the first letter from her mother when again she was shipped off to another place, this time to Viatka, which is one of the worst prisons in Russia, notorious for filth and starvation conditions, and, what is worst of all, for the outrageous conduct of the men keepers—"comrades" they are called—towards their helpless victims, the women prisoners. Since Maria Korshunova was transferred to that place of torture, no letter has been received from her and no news about her has reached the outside world.

This comrade is well known among the Petrograd workers as a woman revolutionary of great idealism and sincerity. She has often been compared with Sofia Perovskaya.

Another example:

Two years ago, Maria Veger,* an Anarchist of many years stand-

*See Section III, Northern Camps, pages 178, 200, for Maria Veger.

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ing, and a teacher by profession, was arrested as a result of a search in her home, where literature consisting of copies of the London *Freedom and Arbeiter Freind*, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* (N. Y.), and some books on Anarchism (were found Ed.)

After being held for several months in the Moscow prison, where she became sick with the *tsinga* (scurvy), Maria finally received a sentence of two years' exile in Archangel, in the North. The official document which was handed to her read: "Two years exile in the city of Archangel for counter-revolution."

In Archangel, Maria Veger underwent extreme suffering. Malaria, a common disease in this swamp region, was added to scurvy. When an opportunity afforded itself, Maria escaped and returned to Petrograd. But she did not remain long at liberty. In July, 1923, when 41 Anarchists were arrested in Petrograd, Maria Veger was among them. The agents of the "G. P. U." treated her with special brutality. Whereas all the other prisoners, *of whom I was one*, were kept at the headquarters of the "G. P. U." for four days before being transferred to another prison, Maria was held there for nearly two weeks.

The prison of the "G. P. U." is not the heavenly home of leisure the Bolsheviks and their agents would have the world believe. I was locked up in a cell that was a closed box. It was provided with a small hole the size of a drinking cup through which air is supposed to enter, but no air enters because the corridor into which this hole leads also has no ventilation. A faint lamp burns day and night in this closed box, causing severe pain in the eyes. There is nothing but a wooden bench to lie upon; lice, bedbugs and other vermin eat your flesh and make life a burden to you. The quiet of this dim, evil-smelling cell is broken only by the ridicule and brutality of a "comrade" jail-keeper.

The "G. P. U." representatives knew what these conditions meant to the sick Maria Veger, and they purposely tortured her. Each day she was called to the office and asked to give them "information," for which they promised to remove her to another jail where life was not so miserable. When finally convinced that she would rather die than give lying "information" about her comrades, the *Tchekists* ordered Maria Veger transferred to the "Home of Preliminary Detention," where she was strictly isolated and kept on the regime of the "common criminal."

"Do You Think You Are in America?"

The treatment in my own case was far from being endurable. Like the other politicals, I was denied the most elementary prison rights, scoffed at and ridiculed by the prison administration as well as by the higher authorities. For speaking to Maria when seeing her through the window, I was threatened with the dungeon. Being un-

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able to endure such an existence any longer, denied a trial, and held under criminal conditions, we declared a hunger-strike, demanding better conditions and the right of visits. On the seventh day of our hunger-strike, after the prison doctor stated that we could not hold out any longer and that we must be forcibly fed, one of the "G. P. U." chiefs visited us and granted our demands. But before they were granted another comrade prisoner of mine was called by the prosecuting attorney and asked if he could not use his influence with me to induce me to eat. He said he could not. The prosecuting attorney then said to him angrily: "Then she will be forcibly fed. Does she think she is dealing with the American police?" He spoke as if the brutal methods of the American police were tenderness itself compared with what he and his comrades intended to do.

The physical state of Comrade Maria Veger was becoming worse every day, but the prison doctor said he could do nothing for her under the conditions. In spite of the fact that she was seriously ill, Maria was finally condemned to three years exile in the Solovetz Monastery, the dreaded prison situated on an island in the White Sea, to which boats go but twice a year. This penalty amounted in fact to a death sentence, considering the condition of our comrade.

On September 16th Maria was sent away to serve the term imposed upon her, but a week afterwards word came that she was being sent back to Petrograd. After a two days' struggle with the "G. P. U." officials, I finally obtained permission to see her.

Burning with a high fever, and hardly able to stand on her feet, Maria related to me the story of her journey which I shall tell here in brief:

When brought to the Vologda prison, which is half way from Petrograd to Archangel, the local "G. P. U." declared that Maria would not be sent any further, because all prisons and concentration camps of Archangel and vicinity (including Solovetz Monastery) were so overcrowded that the local authorities had resolved to accept no more prisoners. Maria was kept in Vologda for several days, and then sent back, together with a number of other politicals. She was shuffled back and forth, various prisons refusing to accept her for lack of space. No political knows where he will really serve his terms of exile, and none of his friends know.

I had an opportunity to talk to Maria Veger. She made no complaint about her own miserable condition, but she spoke of what should be done for those prisoners who had just been returned to Petrograd. She was particularly anxious about the fate of one woman who had been refused a visit of her seven-year-old boy, and asked that everything possible be done for her, as the woman was physically too weak to endure the suffering to which she was being subjected. We got no further in our conversation because a guard compelled us to terminate the "visit."

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Comrade Veger parted from me with the following words:

"Tell the comrades abroad to organize and unite all their forces. Let them not be discouraged by the situation in Russia. On the contrary, tell them they must make use of our experience and be well prepared for the coming world revolution."

I left her with a heavy heart. While the Communists are issuing long protests against the persecution of political prisoners (they mean only Communists) in "capitalist" countries, they themselves are imposing savage sentences upon their opponents and are forcing many of our best comrades to die slowly in the jails and concentration camps, and hundreds of others to suffer the bitter pangs of hunger and the unbearable cold of northern Russia and Siberia. The real revolutionaries of Russia today are exiled and cut off from the entire world, forbidden the right of communication with any living person except the damnable spies who are forever shadowing their footsteps.

(*Signature*) MOLLIE STEIMER.

Paris, December 24, 1924.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT*

(Refers to material of 1922)

While in Moscow, we heard that a comrade and her friend were on the point of being deported to Siberia or expelled to a foreign country—at their choice—under the pretext that they were Anarchists. This seemed to me abnormal. I asked, then, to be received by Trotzky, as I knew that the latter had intervened before in similar cases. I was denied this interview before even I had given reasons which compelled me to ask for this interview and in spite of the fact that I had explicity said that my visit was prompted by a very serious matter. Confronted with this refusal I sent to Trotzky the following letter:

Comrade Trotzky: Moscow, Dec. 16, 1922.

I have solicited a few minutes' conversation with you, so that I may submit to you a case which has deeply concerned me; upon re-

* From the article "Report of the Delegates in Russia," in May, 1923 number of the Le Metallurgiste. The Anarchist-Syndicalists in Russia derived some protection against persecution from the fact that the Red Trades Union International at Moscow was interested in securing the adhesion of the Anarchist-Syndicalists abroad. Moscow had not adopted as yet the extreme intransigeant attitude it had assumed very early toward the Socialist-Democrats and other "too reformist" elements, with regard to European Anarchist-Syndicalism. In April, 1921, protests from visiting Anarchist-Syndicalist delegates in Russia, and protests from their comrades abroad, induced the Soviet Government to release a number of Anarchists in the Moscow jails, and allow them to leave Russia. It is only fair to add that the protests of Russian Anarchists and the hunger-strikes of those imprisoned, contributed to the final result. Similarly, Alexander Shapiro, well-known Russian Anarchist, owed his release from prison 1922 to protests from abroad. However, as will appear from many documents, despite this, the Anarchists seem to have suffered, in the last analysis, quite as severely from political persecution in Russia as any of the other revolutionary parties.

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ceipt of your brusque refusal to receive me without even knowing the object of my request or its importance, I permit myself to address these few lines which, I hope, you will not refuse to read before throwing them into the waste paper basket.

The case is the following: A Russian comrade, a girl, by the name of Mollie Steimer, age 22, was condemned by the American Courts to 15 years' prison for having made propaganda in favor of the Russian Revolution.

There was much talk about this case; pamphlets were published in many languages disclosing what might be termed a monstrosity.

After 3 years of detention, this girl was finally released and exchanged for American prisoners detained in Russia. Her joy was great when she was told that she could see again the country where, thanks to the power of the proletariat, freedom had triumphed. She came to Russia and I now hear, not without stupefaction, that she is on the eve—after having been imprisoned for some time—of being expelled and sent out to Germany.

I cannot believe this thing possible, because I cannot see any reason which could provoke such treatment, and I hoped, in the interview which I had asked from you, to throw some light on this case.

If the measure decided upon is to be carried out, it is almost equivalent to a sentence of death for this child. Her family is in America, she has no knowledge of the German language and after her sojourn in American and Russian prisons, her state of health is precarious.

Not less than a fact of exceptional gravity, such as banditism (which remains to be proved) should be able, I should say, to provoke this kind of treatment. I would, therefore, wish to be informed upon these facts before my return to France where they are known, so that I may give a true report of the case.

I persist in believing that you did not suspect the importance of the question which I intended to submit to you which has nothing to do with the desire of a delegate to pride himself on having been received by *Trotzky* himself. This is not in my line.

I hope that, having taken into consideration the exposition of the above case which is, to say the least, rather peculiar, you will do your best to obtain the necessary information so that I may get some light on it before I leave.

I hope that I have not trespassed upon your precious minutes and I apologize if this request may cause you the least inconvenience; but I considered it my duty not to leave Moscow without having taken this step.

Accept, comrade Trotsky, my sincere greetings,

CHEVALIER,
Secretary of the Unitarian Federation of
Metal Workers of France.

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After this letter, I was received, together with my friend, by Trotzky who did not hide from us that it was true that this kind of treatment was meted out to Syndicalists and Anarchists. However, he promised, after we had laid the case before him, to obtain information, to intervene and to let us have, upon our return, all details about the case; but until this day nothing reached us, while we learn that our two comrades are still closely watched.*

LUCIEN CHEVALIER.

AFFIDAVIT OF S. I. FLESHIN

(Covers deportation, September, 1923)

1. Simon Isaakovitch Fleshin.†
2. Kieff, December 19, 1894.
3. 34 years.
4. Anarchist.
5. Since 1913.

8-13. Arrested five times:

(1) In November 1918, with the other delegates to the Second Conference of Anarcho-Syndicalists. By order of the Vetcheka. An hour or two later, no examination having taken place and no accusation having been brought forward, I was released with the other delegates.

Closing Anarchist Club

(2) On January 10, 1920, in Kharkoff, in the Anarchist Club, by order of the Special Department of the Army. The order referred to the arrest of all Anarchists, to the carrying out of a search and to the closing of the Club. Was transferred, with the other Anarchists, to the prison of the Special Department. No accusation was brought forward. There was no examination. About 40 in all were arrested. Conditions of confinement were bad. Cellar of the former residence of the Governor-General, divided up in wooden partitions, making small cells literally packed with people—like herrings in a barrel. There were no beds, no chairs. Food consisted of badly baked black bread and water. After a collective protest of all the imprisoned Anarchists, one part of the comrades, together with those who were accidentally captured on the day of the arrest, were released; the rest were transferred to a more spacious cell on the first floor and were

* As a matter of fact, according to the statements of Miss Steimer, herself, in her affidavits, this protest and others, from foreign sources, did procure her liberation the first time she was arrested in Petrograd, and prevented her deportation, after her release to Germany. It was after her second imprisonment, in 1923, that she was actually deported to Germany.

†This questionnaire by Fleshin is given in full because of its general interest and the picture it gives of political persecution in the provinces as well as in Pertograd. The actual account of Petrograd prison conditions begins with paragraphs numbered "4" and "5" in that part of the questionnaire covering "arrests."

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given boiled water. We had to sit or lie on the floor, as the cell was absolutely empty. We thus remained for 9 days. After a sharp protest had been sent to the Chief of the Special Department, Dukelsky, in which we demanded our release, our representative was called out and told that we would be released, but that our Club would be closed and our literature confiscated. We demanded explanations, but none were given. After a prolonged row with the authorities we were able to get the confiscated literature returned: among these books were works of Kropotkin, Bakunin, Tolstoy and others. The Anarchist Club was closed for ever.

(3) After the Club had been closed, the Anarchist groups "Nabat" ("Alarm") and "Vol'noye Bratstvo" ("Free Brotherhood") opened a book store in which Anarchist literature was being sold. Individual arrests of Anarchists, usually caught in the streets, ceaselessly continued. In May 1920 was confiscated the printing plant of the "Vol'noye Bratstvo", while all the workmen of the publishing house were arrested. As secretary of the publishing department I had to carry on lengthy negotiations with the Chairman of the All-Ukrainian *Tcheka*, Mantzeff, for the return of the printing plant and the release of the workmen. These negotiations lasted a month and gave no results.

About the beginning of June, 1920, as I was returning to our book store from one of these negotiating visits, I was met at the doors by three military men who directed their revolvers at me. I was taken into the book store, which was packed with people. Many of our comrades were there as well as many casual visitors who had come in to buy books. An order of arrest, issued by the Special Department of the South Western Front, was presented to all; this order also enjoined a search to be made and the store to be closed. The search was made, books being thrown down to the floor, while the *tchekists*—there were about 30 of them—trampled over them. Nothing but published literature was found and this was stated in the act that was drawn up. We were kept till the evening as in a trap. Over 100 people were thus captured. The Commandant of the Special Department came in the evening; he examined everyone's documents, releasing most of the people. Twenty-seven Anarchists, under a heavy escort, were sent to the prison of the Special Department.

Executions at Night

We were given a cell which could not hold more than 15 persons. Upon our arrival the number of people in that cell was already 43. There was, for every three of us, a wooden plank, without any bedclothes. The filth was terrible. Swarms of parasites. Our cell was shared by Denikin officers and by all sorts of speculators. They were all exceedingly terrorized and were afraid to talk aloud; they walked

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on tip-toe. They were being systematically scared by threats that they would be shot. On the very first night of our arrival two of the prisoners were called out and were told to take their belongings with them. They dressed, said good-bye and left. A few minutes later we heard shots fired in the court yard. No one could sleep. We overheard, later, a conversation between two sentries to the effect that the red army soldiers who had shot these two men quarrelled over the boots of their victims. As we found out afterwards, a red army soldier obtains, for each execution, the clothes and the belongings of the man he shoots.

As soon as we were brought to the Special Department one of the arrested comrades. Andrey Andreeff, an old Anarchist who had spent years of hard labor under the Tzarist régime, declared a hunger-strike, demanding his release. On the next day all were released with the exception of nine persons: Andrey Andreeff, Joseph Gotman, Isaac Teper, Siomka Kievsky, Lea Gotman, Fanny Avrutzkaya, Katya Kharkovskaya, Rebecca Yaroshevskaya and myself. These nine were accused, by word of mouth, of having had relations with Makhno. Three days later we all declared a hunger-strike, demanding our release. The role of warden in this prison was carried out by Don and Kuban Cossacks who had carried out similar functions under the Tzarist régime. Their behavior towards the prison inmates was truly savage. On the fifth day of our hunger-strike Lea Gotman, very weak and barely able to walk, walked by my cell's peep-hole. She stopped for a while close by and asked me for a cigarette. I had barely time to take the box of cigarettes out of my pocket, when I heard a dull thud on a body, a fall and a scream from Lea. I jumped to the peep-hole: Lea was on the floor, and over her stood one of the wardens with his rifle close to her body, shouting: "Get up, you cursed rascal of a woman".... and coarse swear-words followed....

Blood rushed to my head and, in my madness, I began hitting the door with my feet and fists; the other comrades joined in and for a few minutes the whole corridor was transformed in an incessant rumble, until the Commandant made his appearance. We protested against such brutal conduct. All he said was: "Send in your complaint."....

I was called out for examination on the sixth day of the hunger-strike. I was weak and was supported by two red army soldiers. The magistrate who examined me was a young man (a sailor whose name escapes me). At the hearing were present: The Chief of the Special Department of the Staff of the South Western Front, Evdokimoff; the President of the All-Ukrainian *Tcheka*, Mantzeff; the President of the Kharkoff *Tcheka*, Ivanov, and the President of the All-Russian *Tcheka*, Dzerzhinsky, who had at that time arrived in Kharkov with special instructions to fight Anarchism and rebellion in the Ukraine. I was presented, verbally, with the accusation of having had relations

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with Makhno. I demanded documentary evidence establishing such relations. Evdokimoff showed me a leaflet printed by the Makhno army against the Soviet Power in the corner of which the words "to Joseph" were written in ink, and stated that this leaflet was sent by Makhno to Joseph Gotman and was found in our book store during the search. "This is a clear fraud" I replied and demanded the act drawn up during the search which gave the list of what was found while it was carried out. Evdokimoff asked for the document from the examining magistrate; the latter did not exactly know where it was. I then produced, from my pocket, the copy of this act which had been handed to me as secretary of the publishing department. The magistrate turns pale and begins to lose his wits; the officials make their exit. I refuse to speak and am brought back to my cell.

On the eleventh day of Andrey Andreeff's hunger-strike (which was the eighth day for all the others) we were told that our demands would be acceeded to; we shall all be released, but not before we shall be brought to Moscow. We accepted, and ceased our hunger-strike. All the nine of us were transferred to a separate, large, clean and and light cell. We stayed there three days and then all of us were gradually released in Kharkov.

As an after-effect of this detention, Katya Kharkovskaya developed consumption and soon died. The Anarchist printing plant was confiscated for ever. The book store was reopened but was definitely demolished in November, 1920.

(4) In Petrograd. I was awakened at 2 A. M. on November 1. 1922. by a knock on the door. Upon opening the door, seven men, armed with rifles and revolvers, threw themselves into the room. "Hands up! Where are the firearms?"—these were the shouts I heard, and I felt on my temple the cold steel of a revolver. When the light was switched on I saw three men in civilian clothes, one woman, two red army officers, the house superintendent and the flat holders standing at the door. This group was headed by the magistrate attached to Anarchist cases, Shmidkoff. I was shown an order of the Petrograd "G. P. U." for the arrest of Mollie Steimer and myself and for a search in my room. One of the *Tchekists* directed his revolver at me and asked where Steimer was. I refused to answer. The search lasted for over two hours. Nothing but a few letters from relatives and from friends abroad was found together with some old Anarchist newspapers, journals and books.

The Gorohovaya

About 5 A. M. I was brought to the Inner Prison of the "G.P.U." on the Gorohovaya Street. I met, in the Commandant's office, a number of comrades arrested that same night. There were altogether 29 arrrests. I was put into a solitary cell. This is one of the prisons

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set up by the Soviet Power. It is an ordinary private flat divided up, by wooden partitions, into 44 solitary cells. Each cell is about 3 steps long by 1½ steps broad. Half of the cell is occupied by a plank with no mattress. Electricity is burning day and night, as there is no other source of light. There is absolutely no air. All the prisoners stand close to the opening in the door through which food is handed in, so that they may breathe some air at least. Food is utterly unpalatable: a soup that reminds one of dishwater; one pound of black bread very badly baked and boiled water. This is all. Yet, all this was but half of the misfortune. The greatest nightmare were the parasites. The place was reeking with them; a piece of bread lying on the table would soon become a moving mass. No one was able to have a minute's sleep while staying in th's cell.

On the second night, I was called out at 2 A. M. for examination. I was examined by the magistrate Shmidkoff and his assistant, Kondratieff. I was accused, verbally, of having transgressed §60, 62 and 63 of the Criminal Code which referred to appeal to counter-revolutionary rebellion with a view of overthrowing the Power of Soviets and relations, for that end, with foreign bodies. When I asked for the evidence, Shmidkoff replied that the fact that I was a member of the "Society to Aid the Imprisoned Anarchists", that this organization was illegal and that I, together with other comrades, had been corresponding upon matters concern'ng that organization with comrades living abroad, was sufficient. I refused to reply to any question and was sent back to my cell.

At 7 A. M. all the Anarchists were packed off to the House of Preliminary Detention on the Shpalernaya Street.

Many of the comrades were released in the third week of confinement. To those that remained the sentence was read exiling them to different parts of Siberia. Comrade Steimer and myself obtained 2 years' exile to Obdorsk. As a protest, we both declared a hunger-strike. After one day's strike all were released on the signed understanding that they would not leave Petrograd and would present themselves the next day to the "G .P. U."

Some of those who came the next day were asked to sign an understanding that they would not participate in any Anarchist work.. Steimer and myself refused to give such an understanding. The representative of the "G .P. U." then declared as follows: "In such case, you will have to reproach but yourself if, after a while, we shall again arrest you and exile you to Siberia. If, however, you are willing, the "G. P. U." is ready to give you passports that would enable you to go abroad." We accepted the latter proposition.

The Anarchist and Syndicalist delegates to the Red Trade Union International Congress were, at that time, in Moscow. Their intervention stopped our deportation.

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Last Arrest and Deportation

(5) In Petrograd. At 1 A. M. on July 9th, 1923, our room was visited by the examining magistrate, Ivanoff, of the Petrograd "G. P. U.", accompanied by six *Tchekists*. An order was shown for the arrest of Mollie Steimer and myself and for the carrying out of a house-search. The latter lasted for about three hours. Nothing except Anarchist literature was found.

An ambush was set up in our flat. The flat belonged to a medical practitioner who received many visits from patients. During four days, all those who were coming to this flat were detained and no one was allowed to go out, even to fetch food. A young girl who had rushed to the doctor to get him to come to her dying mother, was trapped in the ambush; tears, cries, hysteric outbursts — nothing helped; her mother died while she was kept in that trap in a fit of hysteria. No declaration on our part that these people had nothing to do with our case helped to take off the ambush.

We were sent to the Inner Prison of the "G. P. U.", on the Gorohovaya Street, and were locked in solitary cells. Here I found out that 41 of our comrades were arrested on that night—sympathizers or incidentally caught in one of the sixteen ambushes that were set.

The same horrible conditions as in the former case. The parasites were literally feeding themselves on us. It was hard to breathe in the cell.

At the end of the third day, at night, I was called out. I was accused, verbally, of propagating Anarchist ideas and of relations with foreign countries (§60 of the Criminal Code). I was questioned by the examining magistrate Ivanoff. When I asked for evidence he replied: "We have plenty of data," and showed letters sent legally by post from some comrade living abroad. I refused to answer questions.

After a 4 days' life under unbearable conditions, we sent an energetic protest, demanding our transfer to the House of Preliminary Detention. We were transferred there on July 13th.

The prison conditions in the House of Preliminary Detention are very much better. No insects; fairly clean; weekly baths; hot food twice a day. Although the food is not quite fresh, it is nevertheless eatable. A two hours' walk per day is allowed.

Twenty-six men were released within the first fortnight. The rest of us (15 Anarchists) received their act of accusation in writing.

The woman comrades who were arrested at the same time, Maria Veger and Mollie Steimer, were kept in strict solitary confinement and were treated like criminals. They declared a hunger-strike, demanding their transfer to the political ward, improvement of conditions and the right of receiving visits. The Left Socialist-Revolutionist,

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Lyda Surkova, (suffering from consumption) and sentenced to three years' exile to Petshersk, the "Non-party" woman, Zoe Benzina, and myself, upon finding out that our comrades had hunger-struck, joined in, at different intervals, by proclaiming a solidarity hunger-strike.

ALL FOUR ANARCHISTS IN SOLOVETZ

VERA KEVRIK
(Dudkova)
Working girl, for many years in the revolutionary movement.

ARON BARON

GERSHUN TARLOVSKY
("Geraska")
Student

DORA STEPNAIA
Working girl.

On the sixth day of my hunger-strike, the magistrate Ivanoff proposed to me to cease hunger-striking, inducing the women to do the same. I told him that, so long as our demands have not been complied with, we will not cease our hunger-strike. Angered by our refusal, Ivanoff lost his temper and shouted that he would not satisfy any of our demands and would, from the next day on, resort to artificial feeding. "Steimer thinks," he said, "that it is the American Gov-

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ernment she is dealing with, and that whatever she asks will be complied with.... None of that!"

Having called him a scoundrel, I returned to my cell. On the seventh day of the hunger-strike a member of the Board of the "G. P. U.", Zbrnev, arrived and, after a prolonged scandal, complied with all the demands.

All the 15 Anarchists had remained 7 weeks in prison. They then received the following sentence:

"The Administrative Enquiry Commission of the "G. P. U." having examined the dossier of the Petrograd Anarchists accused under §60 of the Criminal Code, resolves:

The workmen: Igor Zenzinov, Shiloff, Sokoloff, Gorbitsh, Savitzky, Ivan Likhatchoff, Efim Likhatchoff, Pryanishnikoff; the students: Rodziankin, Sapeloff, Ponomariov and the red-army soldier Petroff—to be deported for two years to places outside the Petrograd Province, without the right to live in Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, Odessa or in any port or in the frontier zone;

Maria Veger (teacher)—to be interned for 3 years in the Solovetz Concentration Camp;

Mollie Steimer and Simon Fleshin—to be deported outside the frontiers of the R. S. F. S. R. for ever."

That sentence was read to us.

On September 26, 1923 the agent of the "G. P. U.", Kolossoff, handed us our passports with a visa for Germany and tickets for the sea-passage, Petrograd-Stettin. We left on September 27, 1923.

From 1918 to 1920 I was active in the Ukraine, in Kharkov and in Kiev, in the Anarchist underground organization against the reaction of Skoropadsky, Petlura and Denikin, and was more than once arrested by the authorities.

SIMON FLESHIN.

THE PRISON WITHOUT BARS

Gorohovaya, 1922

One wants to believe that this letter will reach you. But to believe is one thing, and to overcome all the infernal difficulties,—the bayonets, the isolation of my cell, the sharp eye of the prison cerberus, the searches, and the many other extraordinary police measures,—is another thing.

Do not forget that I am writing this from a torture-chamber, in comparison with which the Russian bastilles-Schluesselburg and Petropavlovsk, the dungeons where I languished in the old days as a "state criminal", pale in their regime and in their special measures.

I will take the liberty of describing briefly the arrangement and

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régime of the "prison without bars", and to cite some facts which, it seems to me, cry to heaven.

*There are two buildings for general prisoners and two for solitary confinement. The latter deserves telling about. In a room covering 986 square feet, in the first building, 29 cells have been built. Each cell is 5 and a half feet long and 3 and a quarter feet wide. More than half of the cell is occupied by a bunk and a little table. This is all the furniture, except a dull little electric bulb, of about five candle-power, right under the ceiling. Nothing else. No windows. No matresses, no quilts, no pillows, the prisoners sleep on bare bunks in the cold rooms. The doors of the cells are locked day and night. Here everything is forbidden: open-air exercise, conversation, reading, etc. You are permitted only to breathe the poisonous air, to eat during the day two little bowls of soup, prepared from dried herring, and a pound of bread, to drink three cups of hot water with a teaspoonful of granulated sugar. And that is all. Incidentally, the first building is considered the better. I spent only four days there.

In the second building there are the "coolers" and the so-called cork-cells. The former are simple. There are windows in them but without glass. The "coolers" where people spend weeks in terrible suffering, partly due to undernourishment, are provided in order to "starve out" the prisoners' "heresy".

The "Cork Cells"

The cork-cells are the acme of prison craft. The walls, floor, ceiling and door are inlaid with cork. There are no windows, no bed. The "furniture" is like that of the first building. There are only 2 "cork-cells". (I was confined in one of them. The "cork-cells" are regarded as the most "terrible" and isolated of all.) I am more and more convinced that it is enough to spend 3 or 4 months in a "cork-cell" in order to become a physical wreck. The absence of natural light, (in mines horses go blind) of fresh air, walks, a bed, and the meagre nourishment, the absence of a change of underwear, the cold and the dampness! One must add the ban on books, the wealth of huge spiders, bugs, mice and other "creatures". The confinement becomes difficult to bear.

One of the walls of "my" "cork-cell" is saturated with stinking fluid, a toilet is directly above it.

Outside the cork-door is a guard, who walks his beat day and night, stamping the floor with his boots.

This noise, as well as the noise made up-stairs in the kitchen of the "commissars", have their effect.

Once upon a time the tomb-like stillness of the Trubetzkoy tower

*See illustration on page 87.

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had a deadly effect on my nervous system and caused sleepless nights with dreadful hallucinations. Now, it is the other way....

In the next "cork-cell" there was for several days a man whose identity I did not know, who shrieked all the time in an inhuman voice, stamping his feet and beating his head against the wall for hours at a stretch. I did not know who he was and why he was jailed, whether he was insane or was only simulating, but I did know that it was a human being beating his head against a wall and in spite of myself I would think that any moment the wall might be covered with human brains....

E. Litvinova, a member of the Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party, was put into "cooler" No. 10, to "starve out" her party loyalty. This was in March, when the cold in Petrograd was 19 degrees below zero. She wore a shabby autumn coat. She was doubled up in convulsions from the cold, and contracted a dull cough which resounded throughout the building. She spent a week in the "cooler". The *tchekists* observed that the heresy was not driven out of her, while her health was growing constantly worse. They transferred her to another cell.

But there are also other means of "influence" being employed here. At first they put a young man into "cork-cell" No. 1, a worker of the Putilov plant by the name of Misha. He related that the investigators conducted the inquiry with....a block of wood.

In cell No. 21 there was an insane person, a certain Bryjanovsky, an ordinary criminal. The prosecuting authorities, in order to find out whether he was ill or only simulating, took him on February 28 for examination, and applied the latest "scientific experiments" to him by cauterizing his body. After this "scientific examination" the "experts" of the Gorohovaya gave it as their diagnosis that Bryjanovsky was not "deceiving" them. The sick man was sent to a hospital. But two days later he was again called before investigator Mihailov, one of the chief "scientists".

Scenes of a different kind are being staged here for political "sanitation". Thus, there was arrested on April 1 the sailor Yakovenko, the associate chairman of the Kronstadt Revolutionary Committee during the uprising of 1921, who came from Finland to Petrograd to organize the revolutionary activities. Together with Yakovenko, another rebel, Petrov, was arrested; the latter, afraid of the "torture-chamber", betrayed all and entered the service of the *Tcheka*.

The investigators "bothered" with Yakovenko fifteen hours daily, they strove to extort a "confession" from him and a written appeal by him to the rebels to return to Lenin's kingdom. The authorities promised in advance to pardon the rebels for all their secret and open sins. The "amnesty" of 1921 was again dragged out from the archive, and in the name of communist honor they swore that they would carry it out punctiliously.

Yakovenko was not caught on this hook. Indeed, it would have

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been criminal on his part to become a Bolshevist advocate. The *Tcheka* would mete out its punishment regardless of any guarantees and solemn promises....

When Yakovenko categorically refused to send such a message, the "experts" of the Gorohovaya advanced a more convincing argument. Behind a curtain was mobilized the "public opinion" of Kronstadt. Several women (certainly wives of Communists) began to "persuade" Yakovenko that before and after the revolt they were satisfied with existing conditions, and they demanded of him, as the leader, that he return their "sons" to them. Yakovenko would not budge. Then the women began to spit in the face of the imprisoned revolutionist.

When this disgusting comedy ended, the *Tchekists* said to him: "You see now, that the mass of the people, the lower classes, were against the revolt."

The Bolsheviks have forgotten the revolutionary magnanimity with which the rebels treated the arrested commissars.*

In recognition of this magnanimity, they hand-cuffed Yakovenko upon his arrest. In addition to Yakovenko, there are two more members of the Revolutionary Committee in prison, Kupolov at the Gorohovaya and Archipov at the Special Section of the *Tcheka* on Italiansky Street.

A certain Danilov occupied the "cork-cell" before me. Why he was arrested I do not know. But he left traces of his painful suffering on the wall. Together with him his family was arrested—the wife and son. The latter was....1 year and 2 months old. The unfortunate father inscribed on the wall this heart-rending cry: "My boy Kolya, aged 1 year and 2 months, is under arrest. He is suffering—what for?"

But "the boy Kolya" was not a pioneer. A large number of such "conspirators" have been imprisoned before him, guilty of being the children of fathers who were in disfavor at the Kremlin....

And so, my dear ones, on March 7, (1922—Ed.) after almost half a year of freedom, I was again imprisoned. You know that the six months of freedom were bought at a high price—through an escape from the Central Penal Prison of Orel where I landed after the famous beating of the Socialists and Anarchists in the Butirky, in the night of April 26. (1921—Ed.) I knew that the *Tcheka* would cruelly avenge the slap which I inflicted by escaping from the model prison (in Orel.—Ed.) of Djerjinsky which has preserved all the worst features of the Czar's régime and added all the the "best" of the Communist. On guard there like a faithful dog, stands the scoundrel Saat, the former assistant warden of the Yaroslav Penal Prison, robbing

*During the Kronstadt revolt, the rebels at Kronstadt arrested several Bolshevik commissars at that time in the fortress and held them, without, however, doing them any physical injury.

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the prisoners. The whole flock of jailers formerly served the Czar. Several days before my escape, one of our comrades declared to the assistant warden Sokolov, formerly a Czarist jailor and now a Communist: "When will you stop tormenting us. There is only one thing left to do—either to smash one's head against the wall or to escape from here even at a risk."

The answer of the little satrap was classical. It could serve as an ornament for the history of the Russian Communist Party: "You are not forbidden to smash your head here," said Sokolov, "but as to escaping....one is either taken to the morgue from here or set free by order."

Attempted Escape

When arrested at the secret quarters on the Zvenigorodskaya, (March, 1922, in Petrograd.—Ed.) I made my next attempt to escape. Seizing my cap, I jumped out of the house just as I was, without an overcoat. A hunt was started for me at once, I fell in the yard and was caught, but tore myself away and continued to run. This time, however, fortune did not favor me. My heart failed. I fell on the street. The *tchekists* pounced upon me like vultures. They emphasized their victory by a blow with the butt of a pistol on my back. They picked me up. Two cold muzzles were put against my temples. I was led to the automobile....

"Are there any hand-cuffs in the automobile?" one *tchekist* inquired of the other. "No," was the answer.

I was asked some questions, threatened, but I heard nothing. I was pained to the depth of my soul and, speaking frankly, was sorry at the moment that they did not shoot me. I was pained because I, an old revolutionist, had to become unwittingly the betrayer of our best organizations, as I had then in my pockets a lot of secret addresses, most of which were not in code. It was painful.... The comrades might forgive me if I were dead....

Especially since I was staking everything, I thought that either I would be killed in the attempt to escape or that I would again, as a loyal soldier of the revolution and the party, be at my revolutionary post, continuing the work under the unbearably difficult conditions. Something else happened.... I was taken prisoner alive.... In the automobile I had a "breathing-spell" as the *tchekists* were also fatigued. I utilized this to destroy the addresses. Stuffing my mouth with paper, I chewed hard.

The *tchekists* noticed it. One of them said to the other: "He must have taken poison."

"Well, he can go to the devil," was the answer.

I swallowed part of the paper and the other part I expectorated. Only then they understood that I did not take poison, but was eating

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documents. They threw themselves upon me, forcing open my mouth, but it was already too late.

I breathed freely.

But finally the fellows rested, the automobile started. Then they began to "work". With one blow the cap was struck from my head. I was beaten with the butt of a revolver over the hands and limbs, my fingers still hurt me, and in the first days it was difficult to hold a spoon. But that was not enough for the sadists. They subjected me to real torture.... It is dreadful to recall.... They tortured my eyes....and sexual organs.... I lost consciousness.... When I felt the first blow, I firmly resolved not to emit a single sound, a single groan. And biting my lips hard, I kept silent. My grave-like silence was taken as a sign of "weak pressure". The latter was increased.... Again I lost consciousness. When I came to myself, blood was streaming from my nose and left cheek.

"Why did you make him bleed?" one *tchekist* asked the other, "do as I have done, it causes pain but there is no blood."

Finally I was dragged into the commandant's office, in the Gorohovaya 2. I could neither stand nor sit. There was a row of chairs near the wall. I lay down. Blood was streaming from my throat. But the assistant commandant on duty kicked me off with his foot, declaring that it was not permitted to lie there. In the keepers' room, during the personal search, I again lost consciousness for a short while.

I was taken before the investigator, but refused to answer, except that I was a member of the party of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists. From the investigator I was taken to the "cork-cell".

Three days later the chief of the prosecuting department, Piukenen, called me out. There were present a whole squad of spies and agents-provocateurs to recognize me, but seeing the marks of torture on my face, he gave up the examination. He granted me a "favor" and transferred me from the "cork-cell" to the first building. Four days later I was again called before the prosecutor, but I categorically declared that I did not care to talk with the representatives of the resurrected Inquisition.

"You will learn to talk and acquire the desire for it in the cork-cell," the investigator answered, and I was placed in the cork-cell, where I still am to-day. I am physically worn-out and feel that if I should spend another 3 or 4 months in the cork-cell, without light, I will go altogether blind.

My dear ones. Soon it will be the First of May. Our great holiday. On that glorious day, following the example of former years spent in prisons, I will declare a hunger-strike as a protest against the communist violence and torture-chambers in which I am spending my fourth First of May. That day will add my voice too to the hymn of the toilers seeking their emancipation from the paws of capitalism

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and violence, regardless of the names and flags under which they may be disguised. . . .

Good bye, until better days, many kisses.

Petrograd, Gorohovaya 2, the "Cork-cell."

April 9, 1922. I. A. SHABALIN*

HERETICAL STUDENTS

(Shpalerka, Petrograd, 1924)

As a result of our futile demands to be transferred from the criminals' ward to that of the political prisoners (there were appeals to the Administration, the "G. P. U." and the Procuratorship), things moved as far as an obstructive demonstration, with the smashing of the eyeholes and window-holes in the doors, etc. On April 30, fifty students declared a hunger-strike supported by a group of prisoners charged with social-democratic activity. After six to seven days of the hunger-strike, some of the demands were satisfied.

On the night of May 7, the social-democrat Malevsky, Savadsky and Khavinson received an order to proceed to Moscow. Indignant over the fact that, in spite of promises, they were being sent off without warning, and exhausted by the hunger-strike which had just ended, they refused to go. They were dragged by force; during which operation blood streamed from Malevsky's throat all over the cell. This aroused the anger of the entire "political" corridor, which declared a new obstructive demonstration and a hunger-strike of one day as a protest. Up to 200 people participated in it. The obstructionists were punished by being deprived of their promenading hours and of any packages received for them. This punishment was, however, removed afterwards by Messing. For the damage to state property, for the "economic-revolution," as one of the prison functionaries put it, a huge bill was presented to the "hirelings of the English bankers."†

The examination conducted by investigator Kozhevnikow who was sent here from Moscow was very characteristic. The charges made were truly mythical: we are accused of belonging to some non-existing organizations, many of us for participating in the activity of five of them simultaneously. The questioning is a mere formality. Kozhevnikov behaved at the inquiries in the most offensive manner. He shouted, stamped his feet, addressed the prisoners familiarly with "thou," cursed. His usual epithets were "scoundrels," "rascals," "kids," "milksops." Especially galling was his treatment of the women. He threatened with the Solovki which he described as "a place where they let counter-revolutionists' blood," and where recently six Socialists

*See his letter, page 139.

†The bolshevist press frequently refers to the socialists as "the hirelings of the English bankers".

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had been shot. He invited several of us to become agents of the "G. P. U.," threatening in the event of a refusal "to make further study impossible and to make life generally intolerable."

The results of such an "inquiry" were sentences unheard of for their cruelty. So far, fifty-six have been sentenced, forty-one men and fifteen women: 21 men and 7 women to concentration camp for three years, 2 men and 1 woman for two years, 6 men and 1 woman to exile for three years, 2 men and 6 women to exile for two years.

This cruelty, one should bear in mind that the majority of the prisoners are non-partisan and many are absolutely non-political, is explained simply. Kozhevnikov dropped a remark that the operation did not catch the proper people and that therefore it was necessary to punish particularly severely those who were caught so that the others who are free should not carry on too much.

The workingman A. M. Smirnov, who was arrested in Petrograd, formerly a member of the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party and now a student of the Petrograd University, was invited by investigator Kozhevnikov to head a movement of "ex-Socialists." "You only have to sign these five lines and you will be free again, otherwise we will keep you." Smirnov rejected this favor of the gendarme. The result was three years of exile in the province of Viatka.

Petrograd, May, 1924. (*Signature*)

OBSTRUCTION IN PRISON

In the First House of Correction, Petrograd, 1923.

During the last months, the food rations to the political prisoners have been diminished. Our protests brought nothing. The April ration has not been received yet.

On April 12, three Anarchists (Motchenovski, Korshunoff, Kamkhi) declared a hunger-strike, demanding that the full ration be delivered. The remaining inmates (the Left Socialist-Revolutionists condemned to death: Beresneff, Gruzdeva-Litvinova, Sokolova and Saper, the Social-Revolutionists Moskvin and Estrim, the Anarchist Nikolaeff, the minority Socialist-Revolutionist Petroff, and Nazaroff who awaits sentence) abstained, hoping to have the question settled by way of negotiations with the Procurator. On the second day of the Anarchists' hunger-strike (April 13) a declaration was sent to the Procurator asking him to come at 1 P. M. on April 14 for a personal talk, as it became known that the "G. P. U.," from whose stores the rations were being distributed, refused to do it any longer, with the explanation that prisoners of the First House of Correction were not under their jurisdiction but under that of the Tribunal. We decided that if the Procurator failed to appear or if the ration would be definitely refused, we would begin our hunger-strike on April 16.

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About 4.30 P. M. on April 14 we were called out to give some information upon certain points of a questionaire that had to be filled in. Quite accidentally we found out—against the wish of the authorities—that by order of the Provincial Administration of Prisons (P. A. P.), dated April 13, we were to be transferred to the Lefortovo prison, Moscow. The transfer was to take place on April 17. Having learned of their transfer to Moscow, the hunger-striking Anarchists gave up the strike. A statement was sent to the P. A. P. asking it to send its representative at 12 noon on April 16 with a view of settling the conditions of transfer which would be acceptable; it was mentioned that in case of non-appearance at the hour fixed, we would leave to ourselves full freedom of action. It should be noted, that in the case of all those whose transfer was decided, only two had their sentence notified to them, namely Moskvin and Estrin; as to the others, the sentences passed upon them were under appeal; the appeal was not yet heard. Thus the P. A. P. had no right to order their transfer and had nothing to do with those of us who were under examination.

On Monday noon, April 16, when neither the Procurator nor the representative of the P. A. P. had put in an appearance, we sent a second statement indicating that in spite of the non-reply to our two requests, we were willing to wait for them another two hours. Neither the Procurator nor the representative of the P. A. P. paid any attention to this.

At 2 P. M. on April 16, while singing revolutionary songs, we began an obstruction on the third floor of the solitary wing. Window glasses were smashed in 4 frames; bottles and crockery were thrown down on to the first floor corridor (care being taken not to hit any of the officials or wardens). The obstruction lasted about 10 minutes At this moment a detachment of guards was introduced into the wing, together with wardens—communists armed with rifles and revolvers —about 40 men in all, with the Assistant Chief Cherniakoff in command. We explained to him, in the corridor, the reason for the obstruction, after which most of us, at a signal from the leader, returned to our cells. Cherniakoff, revolver in hand, and accompanied by armed men, rushed into our cells and shouted: "What is this debauche." We again explained to him that the reason for the obstruction was the non-arrival of the Procurator and of the representative of the P. A. P., in spite of our repeated requests. Then only did Cherniakoff tell us that the Procurator had refused to come. We replied that the obstruction will again be resorted to until the arrival of the Procurator and of the representative. The door and the peep-hole of the cell were locked and sentries were placed along the galleries of the wing. An hour later the obstruction was renewed, this time inside the closed cells. After a couple of minutes, one of the sentries fired his rifle. The bullet, having broken through the upper partition of

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the door, *exploded* and its splinters wounded L. V. Petroff in the head and face. After this, the obstruction ceased and the medical officer was called out. The chief medical officer, Levitan, who examined the wounded man, refused to draw up the act in the cell, but sent the same evening a copy of the document; it is to be noted that the copy speaks of three superficial wounds and a few scratches on head and face brought about by a sharp object.

At 5.20 P. M. arrived the Assistant-Procurator Vorobiov and the representative of the P. A. P., Belyaev. The "starosta" of the politicals, who was invited to come to the office, refused to do so; the Procurator was invited to come to the cell. After a while the Assistant-Procurator and the representative of the P. A. P., accompanied by the authorities of the prison, arrived in the cell and spoke as if they did not know the cause of the obstruction. They attempted to enter into pourparlers with us. We declared that unless the armed men would be withdrawn from the corridors, we refused any kind of conversation. They left without having the sentries withdrawn from the corridor. The Procurator tried, but in vain, to influence us through the comrades who, after the obstruction, were found isolated in solitary cells (Motchenovski and Nazaroff).

After about an hour had passed, the sentries were withdrawn and the Assistant-Procurator and the representative of the P. A. P. came again. After a short conversation, our demands received a satisfactory solution. The transfer was postponed for 7 days; daily visits of relatives were allowed as well as a travelling escort (and not afoot); they promised to give us our full ration—to ourselves (the transferred ones) as also to those who would remain.

The following political prisoners are confined in the First House of Correction (formerly Vyborg Women's Prison): the Left Socialist-Revolutionists condemned to death—Eudoxia Litvinova (M. Gruzdeva), Anna Sokolova, I. Beresnev and David Saper (sentence of death passed on December 18th); the Social-Revolutionists S. N. Moskvin (10 years) and E. P. Estrin (10 years); the Anarchists Marie Korshunova (10 years), Fedor Petrovitch Motchenovsky (10 years) and Egor Nikolaeff (10 years); the minority Socialist-Revolutionist L. V. Petroff (5 years 4 months). Under examination: Nazaroff (minority Socialist-Revolutionist) and Kamkhi (Anarchist).

Obstruction was carried out by the six prisoners who had terms to serve.

APPENDIX TO "OBSTRUCTION IN PRISON"

A. Copies of Statements

(1) To the Provincial Procurator, from the political prisoners confined in the First House of Correction.

In accordance with the circular of the People's Commisariat of Justice, No. 96, of October 7, 1922, a special food ration has been set

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up for political prisoners all over Russia. This ration, in spite of the decree, has very often to be fought for by way of hunger-strikes which the political prisoners were, at different periods, compelled to resort to. Until April, we, political prisoners of the First House of Correction, had received the above-mentioned ration although the "G. P. U." in spite of the amount of the ration fixed, was sending it in diminished proportions. The April ration, owing to bureaucratic red tape, was not handed until the 12th of the month and, at last, it was discovered that the "G. P. U." had refused to deliver the rations from its stores; as a result, we were left without any rations. The unsettled situation had already compelled three of our comrades, political prisoners, to go on a hunger-strike.

In connection with the above and with a view of determining the order in which the rations will be received by us without any delay, we request you to come and see us not later than 1 P. M. on April 14.

The political "starosta"
E. NIKOLAEFF.

(2) To the Provincial Administration of Prisons, from the political prisoners in the First House of Correction.

Considering that we have received a totally unexpected order as to our hurried transfer to Moscow without giving us sufficient notice, at least that we may warn our relatives and collect our belongings, we request that a representative of the P. A. P. see us urgently with a view to fixing the date and conditions of transfer. In case of non-arrival by 12 noon on Monday, April 16, we reserve to ourselves freedom of action.

The political "starosta"
NIKOLAEFF.

(3) To the Provincial Procurator, from the political prisoners in the First House of Correction.

In connection with the questions lately raised and which could only be solved by yourself and by the Provincial Administration of Prisons, we have twice sent statements, but no answer has come so far; this notwithstanding, we find it possible to give you another 2 hours' limit, i.e., we shall wait the arrival of the representatives of the Procurator and of the P. A. P. up to 2 P. M.. on April 16.

The political "starosta"
E. NIKOLAEF.

B. Copy of Medical Ceritficate

On April 16, 1923, having been called out by the Administration of the House of Correction, I examined the deprived-of-freedom Petroff in connection with the hurts received by him in the face. Upon examination it was found: at the angle of the mouth, on the left side, there is an elongated wound of the size of 1 centimeter. The wound

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is superficial. On the left cheek, approximately on a level with the eye, there is a small wound of circular shape; there is also a wound of circular shape in the frontal part of the left side. There is a red-colored swelling on the nose. All the above wounds are superficial. The bones under them are intact. Insignificant scratches are to be found on the right side of the face. There are no other hurts on any other part of the body. My conclusion is: Petroff has received hurts in all probability with a sharp object; these hurts are slight and are of no danger to either life or health.

(*Signed*) Chief Medical Officer of the First House of Correction
P. LEVITAN
(Seal) Dr. SUROVTZER
Copied correctly: (signature illegible)

HOW ZIONIST-SOCIALISTS FARE

(January, 1925)

Moscow, January, 1925.

I inform you of the events that took place in the Kharkov Prison. On January 1 a group of comrades was again imprisoned in the House of Preliminary Detention, from which (the group) had previously been released on guarantee. At the same time the other group that was in prison and which already had received sentences, was preparing to go to Moscow by *étape*. The group that was imprisoned for the second time also had sentences in the same direction. But the prison administration, apparently by order of the "G. P. U.," appointed for the *étape* only one group. The whole cell No. 1 of the distributing wing demanded that they be not separated but sent together.

No reply whatever was received to all the statements made. On January 8 the last telephonogram was sent to the Prosecuting Attorney of the "G. P. U." categorically demanding a reply by 3 o'clock of the same day. There was no reply. Then, between 3and 4 o'clock all the prisoners, totalling 31 persons, almost all our people, began to knock on the door. The long boards of the sleeping benches were put into action. The knocking continued about 15 minutes. There came an official of the administration who began to inquire what was the matter. In a minute came the Assistant on Duty, Galushko, and showed the official the door. Galushko refused to have any explanations with the prisoners. The knocking was renewed and continued for another 10 minutes. Then, without any warning, was given a volley through the windows of the cell, by order of Galushko. One of the shots, recochetting, wounded Moisei Eidelberg in the forehead. The wounded bleeding fell down unconscious. There was no losing of heads. Shouted for medical aid. The administration was demonstratively not admitted to the cell till the medical report was made. There came the *feldsheritsa* (assistant physician, a woman) on duty and

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gave first aid. There was made the record of the following contents: "Record. Coming on a special call on the 8-1-1925 into the cell of the political prisoners No. 1 of the Distributing Wing of the House of Preliminary Detention No .2, I, the *feldsheritsa* on duty, K. A. Krivosheiko, found that citizen Moisei Isaakovitch Eidelberg was wounded in the left side of forehead, as a result of the ricochetting of a gun bullet. When I arrived, the wounded was bleeding heavily and having a fast pulse. All the prisoners in the cell were in an excited and irresponsible condition. The wounded was bandaged by me, and the others I gave aid, medical. Assistant Physician on Duty. (Signature). 8-1-1925, 4.20 P. M."

Immediately the prisoners sent in the following statement:

"To the People's Commissar for Justice; to the Prosecuting Attorney of the Republic; a copy to the 'G. P. U.' U. S. S. R. (Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic.—*Tr.*) As a protest against the coarse arbitrariness of the administration . . . and the wounding of our comrade Eidelberg, we declare a hunger-strike till you will come to see us. All responsibility for possible misunderstanding we place upon you from the moment this Statement is sent. 8-1-25. 4.40 P. M. Authorized by the Group (Signature)."

In an hour came the Magistrate of the "G. P. U." The prisoners refused to talk to him. "We will talk only with the Prosecutor." In the evening there arrived the Chief of the Secret Bureau of the "G. P. U.," the prosecutor and magistrate of the Provincial Court; later also the assistant prosecutor. . . . The demand was presented to them to start the *etape* at once, not later than Saturday. The demand was satisfied. All were sent away Saturday evening. The investigation continued all night. They took from Eidelberg three bloody handkerchiefs with which his fellow-prisoners tried to stem his blood before the arrival of the assistant physician. About the taking of the handkerchiefs was given an official receipt. . . .

Your . . .

(The delegation abroad of the Zionist Socialist Party of Russia hereby certifies that the above is an exact copy of the letter received on January 24th, 1925, from Moscow, from one of the members of the Central Committee of the Zionist-Socialist Party who is still engaged in illegal party work in Soviet Russia and whose name cannot therefore be mentioned. The delegation abroad holds itself fully responsible for the information contained in the letter. The missing parts in this letter correspond with the places which it was not possible to decipher.

Berlin, 30-1-1925.

Seal of the Delegation Abroad of the Russian Zionist-Socialist Party.

Charlottenburg, January 30, 1925.

(*Signed*) MOSES WAISBEIN.)

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PRISON AND EXILE NEWS TO THE END OF 1924

I, the undersigned, Sergius Gan,* Russian, 29 years, having emigrated from Soviet Russia on September 1, 1924, can certify the authenticity of the following facts connected with the persecutions of Socialists and Anarchists by the Government of the Russian Communist Party:

On January 1, 1923, a group of workingmen and students—members of the Left (International) Socialist-Revolutionary Party—was arrested in Petrograd in a private room where they had met to ring in the New Year among personal friends. At the time of the arrest the Petrograd "G. P. U." accused all the eleven detained (Malm, Bogdanoff, Shabalin, Kormoff, Golubkoff, Kormilitzina, Prozoroff and others) of having organized a Party Conference; but in the absence of any evidence, sentenced them to 2 years' exile to Siberia. This comparatively mild sentence was altered, a week later, by the Central "G. P. U." to 3 years' concentration camp on the Solovetz Islands.

The comrades, indignant at such an arbitrary and harsh punishment for having . . . celebrated the New Year, declared a hunger-strike. In the declaration they sent to the All-Russian Central Executive of Soviets and to the Political Bureau, they warned that "we would not drag the hunger-strike for longer than three days; after this, the Government would find itself confronted with the daily suicide of one of the hunger-strikers. Enough of abusing—and senselessly at that—Socialists and workmen. If the Moscow tyrants can coolly look upon our sufferings, then let our comrades in Europe and America know that only the Sazonoff methods of struggle are left to us in Communist prisons."

Even in accordance with the instructions of the All-Russian Central Executive of Soviets, those whom the "G. P. U." considers as "socially dangerous elements" can be exiled for 2-3 years to other cities, but not to concentration camps.

Punctually three days later came the Chairman of the "G. P. U.," Messing. He asked that the hunger-strike should stop, as the initial verdict would be restored.

All the twelve comrades (one member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Silberberg, was added to them) were exiled to Krassnoyarsk. In May, 1924 they received an additional year and were sent out to various distant corners of the district.

Case of Trutovsky

On May 2, 1923, Vladimir Yevgenievitch Trutovsky, member of the Central Committee of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, had

*Left Socialist-Revolutionary. Escaped from Russia to Poland, September, 1924. See his questionnaire, page 279.

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finished his term of imprisonment. An hour before his release from Lefortovo Prison (where we were all imprisoned at that time), the magistrate of the "G. P. U." came and handed to Trutovsky a written accusation in which it was stated that "while incarcerated in the Lefortovo prison, he nevertheless led, from prison, a counter-revolutionary activity directed towards the conquest of power in Russia."

On May 4, the presidium of the "G. P. U." notified Trutovsky that he would be tried by the Supeme Tribunal.

A week later, the Commission of Deportations notified Trutovsky that he would be exiled to Kuldzha, together with his wife and his one-year-old child (Kuldzha is in Chinese territory occupied by the Red Army, 900 versts on camels from the last railway station). Trutovsky refused to go and threatened to burn himself alive in case any attempt would be made to drag him by force. He demanded his release in accordance with Soviet laws and with the agreement arrived at after the hunger-strike of April, 1922 between us and the Chairman of the "G. P. U.," Unschlicht (in the presence of the representatives of the Red Cross—Peshkova and Vinaver), by which no additional repressive measures would be taken against those who finish their sentences passed upon them by Tribunals. Dzerzhinsky had, through his secretary, in presence and in the flat of Bukharin, member of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, declared to the representative of the Party Red Cross, Eugenia Andreyevna Kamkova, that Trutovsky, being a sick man, would be sent with his family to Turkestan for a cure, a guarantee having previously been given that a fortnight's freedom would be allowed that he may arrange his affairs in Moscow.

On May 15, Chistiakoff, member of the Presidium of the "G. P. U.", informed us that Trutovsky was being exiled to Aule-Ata.

The People's Commissar for the Interior, Byeloborodoff, who visited our cells the next day, sent us the information (on May 18) that Trutovsky was being exiled to Pshevalsk (500 versts on camels).

V. E. Trutovsky, after a week's detention in the Inner Prison of the "G. P. U.," where he attempted to burn himself alive, was sent with his family to Aule-Ata.

In December, 1923, in the town of Cherepovetz, where I was banished after I had completed my term of imprisonment, were arrested, after having completed their term of exile, the members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, K. Byelorussoff and Dekansky. They had both peacefully been working, the first in the Communal Department of the Soviet, the other in a Cooperative. No accusations were formulated against them, whereas the Chairman of the local "G. P. U." told them: "You are arrested as a general measure, due to particular considerations, because arrests are being effected in Kieff." Two days later, the Left Socialist-Revolutionary woman, Polya Byelaya, was arrested "for having helped the Right Socialist-Revolution-

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ary Byelorussoff." The wives and children of the imprisoned men were left without any means. In spite of all the trouble taken by the exiled Anarchist Sergius Stytzenko, the Unions and the Administrative organs of the institutions refused to pay not only the month's wages, but also the fortnight's notice—payments that are in accordance with the Code of Labor Laws.

The Cherepovetz provincial Procurator confirmed this lawless act and told Stytzenko that "the Code is not applicable to counter-revolutionists."

In February, the arrested comrades received a fresh sentence: 3 years exile to distant places. Byelorussoff was sent to Ust-Ssylma; Dekansky to Tomsk and, after a 10-days' hunger-strike as a protest for prohibiting his wife and children to leave Cherepovetz, was sent further away to Turkhansk. Byelaya, in spite of her demand, supported by a hunger-strike, to be sent home (Chicago), was exiled to Chikment. (This refers to February, 1924—Ed.)

The material position of those who remained in Cherepovetz—the Anarchists Stytzenko and his wife, and two young Social-Democrats who were just brought from Odessa—is very critical. With the exception of the 6 rubles which they get monthly from the "G. P. U.," they have no other sources of income, as after instructions from Moscow of April, 1924, the exiles have no right to take up paid work.

In Vitebsk, in July, 1924, comrade Martinovsky, member of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, was arrested. He lived legally and worked in a Soviet instituion. He had not worked in the party. He was accused of having received by post, from Moscow, a Party member's-card. Martinovsky is, at present, in the "G. P. U." prison. He expects 2 years' exile to Siberia.

Early in August, 1924, in Nevel, was arrested, in the session room of the Provincial Tribunal, Maximoff, member of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He was witness in a trial against peasants who had attacked, in 1918, a food control detachment. He was accused of being "the idealogical leader of peasants' revolts," as his deposition at the trial was in favor of the accused.

Maximoff is to be tried by the Pskoff Tribunal.

The "G. P. U." was sytematically arresting representatives of the Party Red Cross which existed quite legally and which was attending merely to the sending of food parcels to the prisoners—all other functions of the Red Cross having been paralyzed by the "G. P. U."

In 1921 was arrested the representative of the Red Cross, Sonya Bogoyavlenskaya. She was exiled for three years to the Turkestan (June 28, 1922).

In 1922 Eugenia Valdina was arrested and exiled for 2 years to Vyatka (October 11, 1922).

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On May 30, 1923, was arrested Eugenia Andreyevna Kamkova and exiled to Cheliabinsk for 3 years.

All these three Red Cross workers were accused of having had relations with imprisoned comrades and with the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Since 1924 the Party Red Cross, as well as the Black Cross of the Anarchist Organizations and the Party Red Cross of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Socialist-Democratic parties in many cities of the union, are compelled to help illegally the imprisoned comrades through the latter's relatives. (The Political Red Cross of Madame Peshkova seems to be the only organization for political prisoners still functioning legally—Ed.). . . . . .

*The Cheliabinsk Political Isolator**

This political isolator has been fitted up for the Socialists and Anarchists who are sentenced to long terms of imprisonment with strict isolation. It possesses also common cells for short-term prisoners whom, for political reasons, the Russian Communist Party considers it inconvenient to keep in the prisons of Soviet Russia.

The political isolator is in the Solitary Wing of the old Czarist Hard Labor Prison. This wing is isolated not only from the outer world, but also from the rest of the prison. Electric lighting, canalization, cleanliness. Clothes and underwear are supplied by the prison. The cells are locked. The daily walk lasts 2 hours. "Socialist" ration: 1 lb. of bread, 6 ozs. of meat ½ lb. of oatmeal or potatoes, 2/3 oz. of fats, 2/3 oz. of sugar and 13 cigarettes per day. Work is not permitted, although there were insistent demands of the prisoners in that direction.

This regime has been established after two hunger-strikes against the "G. P. U."

The political isolator has been used since May 26, 1923. I happened to be one of the pioneers. On May 30, B. D. Kamkoff† and myself were struck off, by agents of the "G. P. U.," the list of prisoners under the control of the Chief Penitentiary Administration. We were called to the office of the Lefortovo prison; here we were assaulted, thrown into a motor-car and carried away . . . without belongings, without visits from our relatives, even without having had time to notify our comrades in prison. After a 4-days' journey through the unknown, we reached Cheliabinsk and were locked up in the Isolator. We were searched: books, writing material, underwear—everything was taken away. We were placed in an isolated cell for tw We found out, the next day, by knocking out words on the wall, tha

*See other statements as to the Cheliabinsk Isolator below in this section.

†See Izmailovitch letter, in the Spiridonova collection in Part II, Page 76.

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SERGEI MOROSOV (in the center)—Member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Revolutionist Party. Defendant in the S. R. trial in Moscow, 1922. All the defendants sentenced to death, sentence subsequently commuted and the prisoners held as hostages for the good behavior of their Party members at large. Committed suicide in the Butyrki Prison.

1. BORIS BATURSKY (Boris Solomonovitch Zetlin) — Member of a family of revolutionists of old standing. His brother, Michail Zetlin, defendent in the S. R. case, has been in prison now 4 years and is at present in the Solovki. Another brother, Semeon Zetlin, arrested repeatedly and now in the Solovki. Daria Zetlin, his sister, also now in the Solovki, with her baby child. BORIS BATURSKY-ZETLIN was a member of the Social Dem. Party since the latter part of the nineties. Sent by the Tsar to exile in Yakutsk Territory, freed by the Revolution of 1905. Repeatedly elected a member of the Central Comm. of his Party. End of 1920 arrested in Vitebsk, though inactive in the movement. Died in the prison hospital from typhus, December, 1920.

2. DAVID KOGAN (pseudonym: "The Little Christ")—In 1917 secretary of the Anarchist Federation of Samara and editor of an Anarchist Weekly. Arrested in 1918 by Kolchak; made miraculous escape. Active in the Ukraina Anarchist publications. Imprisoned by Denikin. Since 1920 member of the Nabat secretariat (confederation of Anarchist organizations in the Ukraina). Arrested by the Bolsheviki end of 1920. Escaped Ryazan prison 1921. Rearrested in Moscow. Together with his comrade Akhtirsky mysteriously lost in the Bolshevik prisons.

3. BORIS KAMKOV—Member of the Social Revolutionist Party since 1902. Twice in prison under the Tsar. In 1924 sent for 2 years to Cheliabinsk in exile, where he is now. One of the leading spirits of the Left Social Revolutionary Party.

4. VICTOR KOROBKOV—Social Democrat, working printer. Sentenced to "katorga" under the Tsar. Freed by the Revolution of 1917. Arrested by the Bolsheviki in Odessa as the editor of the "Yuzhni Rabotchi" (Southern Worker), tried by the Revol. Tribunal and acquitted. Arrested again in 1921 and sent by the Kharkov Tcheka to the concentration camp, whence after a few months he returned to Odessa, where he was arrested in 1922 and sent to the Solovki, where he was when last heard from.

5. BORIS MOISEEVITCH SAPIR—Student, 23 years of age. First arrested in Moscow, Feb. 1921. Soon released, but arrested again in the summer of 1921 and sent to Petchora, in the extreme North of Archangel Province. Three months later he escaped, was arrested again and sent to Solovki.

6. ANNA PETROVA KRASNIANSKAYA—Social Democrat since latter part of the nineties. Sent by the Tsar to Viliuisk, Territory of Yakutsk. Freed by the Revolution of 1905. Since then active in the Soc. Dem. Party. Arrested by the Bolsheviki in Moscow, in 1923. Now in the Suzdal Prison, very ill—in that prison there is no medical aid.

7. LEV YAKOBSON—University Student, 22 years of age. Arrested in the Fall of 1923, in Kiev, in connection with the case of the Union of the Social Democratic Youth. Now in the Solovki.

8. ROSA LASANVNA ELMAN—University Student, 24 years of age. First arrested in Moscow on Feb. 25, 1921. After seven months' prison, released. In June, 1922, again arrested and exiled to Usol, Perm Province, for 3 years. In September of the same year transferred to Solovki.

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there were already here: a group of 16 Socialist-Revolutionaries from Transcaucasia, 7 Georgian Social-Democrats, 3 Turcos, and the woman-Anarchist Korshunova from Petrograd. It was their fifth day of a hunger-strike. Their demands were: the above-mentioned ration, walks to last 3 hours and not ½ hour; carrying out of the chamber-pot; books, newspapers, correspondence with relatives, polite behavior on the part of the officials. We joined the protest of our comrades. The strike came to an end on the sixth day, as most of the demands received a satisfactory solution. But the carrying-out of these reforms was accompanied by a series of incidents: The cealseless rude shouts by the wardens at the women during the walk (which was in common); the pulling-out of revolvers; the demanding that the Georgian and Azerbeidjaners should speak Russian even when talking to each other (June 10, by the Commandant Baklunin and by the head-warden Katorgin); a whole series of petty collisions about lavatories, newspapers, etc.—all this created a strained and nervous atmosphere. On June 12 the following incident happened during the walk: The warden asked Kamkoff, who had been walking across the yard and not along it, like the other prisoners, to change his mode of walk. "What does it matter to you which way I am walking?" The warden shouldered his rifle: "Do as you are told or I will kill you." "You are mad!" The warden lowered the muzzle and at the last moment turned the rifle upwards. The shot brought all the *Tchekists;* the prisoners marched upon them. A minute later a sanguinary collision would have been an accomplished fact. The Elder, the Socialist-Revolutionary Shterin, proclaimed that in sign of protest the walk would be stopped. The "G. P. U." inquired into the incident by order of the political bureau of the Russian Communist Party which had heard of what had happened. The result of the inquiry was that an accusation of insulting the sentry while on duty was formulated against B. D. Kamkoff and V. F. Gontcharoff. The next incident which called forth, after a while, the struggle for the inadmissibility of disciplinary punishment of political prisoners by order of the prison officials, took place in August. The prisoner who was in charge of our feeding arrangements, Comrade Vassily Danilovitch Shishkin, demanded of the Commandant of the Political Isolator that the feeding us with putrefied meat should once for all cease, as an epidemic of dysentery was spreading among the prisoners. After a series of persevering requests, the Commandant gave us satisfaction, but sentenced Comrade Shishkin for his "insolence" to seven days cellar. This punishment was afterwards altered into stopping his writing to his mother for 2 months. Since then, there was a systematic deprivation of correspondence for every trifle: noise in the corridor, disobedience to any and every order of the warden, but especially for the recognition of the Elder, whom the "G. P. U." refused to recognize. In October came the prohibition of lectures and conferences, delivered,

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until then, by comrades upon scientific questions, even in the presence of the warden. In the meantime new groups of comrades were arriving at the Political Isolator from all parts of the U.S.S.R.—all of them sentenced to exile or to imprisonment in Cheliabinsk for the same term. Thus, from Tomsk was brought the Socialist-Revolutionary Volkshtotzky; from Vyatka—Studenetzky; from Batum—three Turkish Socialists who had crossed the Soviet border.

The cells were overcrowded. On November 16, the political prisoners met in one of the common cells to discuss the question of overcrowding. The Chief of the "G. P. U.," Korostin, introduced armed force and demanded dispersal. Brute force was used against the women who had come late to the meeting. The head-wardens carried out, while threatening with their revolvers, the Anarchist Korshunova, and did not allow her to go into the cell of the Socialist-Revolutionary Kotchergin. The next day the political prisoners declared a hunger-strike demanding: the respect of the constitution elaborated after the first hunger-strike, individual cells for prisoners suffering from nervous breakdown, and the abolition of the system of disciplinary punishments. These demands received a satisfactory solution on the seventh day of the hunger-strike. Some of the hunger-strikers were submitted to cruel acts of violence. Thus, the Socialist-Revolutionists, Vorobiov, Nevler and Gontcharoff, were dragged by *Tchekists* from the second floor and thrown onto the floor (this was on the third day of the hunger-strike); the first two were thrown into cell No. 1 in which I was kept, while V. Gontcharoff, who had 10 years of Schlusselberg fortress to his credit, was thrown into a solitary cell.

On December 16, 1923 I was released from the Cheliabinsk Isolator. Although the term of my imprisonment had run out on September 21, 1923, and the Governor of the Prison had, in October, already a written order from the Supreme Tribunal, signed by Krylenko, for my release, I spent 2½ months in the Political Isolator for no reason whatever. The Governor of the prison explained to me that he was afraid to release me before he had an order to that effect from the Central "G. P. U." As was found out, the authorities conferred for 2½ months: should I be released or should the term of imprisonment be prolonged. I was, at last, released and was proposed to choose my new place of abode; in other words it was a masked exile to Cherepovetz.

SERGIUS GAN.

Dec. 31, 1924.
Prag.

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FROM THE CHELIABINSK POLITICAL ISOLATOR
(1924)

The representative of the "G. P. U.," Andreyeva, had come from Moscow for the purpose of settling the dispute about the hunger-strike which ended on New Year's Day, 1924. She could not help noticing the high state of excitement reigning among the prisoners and their readiness to fight to the last. It was all due to the latest tragic events: the shootings in Solovki and the suicide of S. V. Morozoff in the Inner Prison (of the "G. P. U."). A milder regime was introduced. A symptom of this "new policy" could be found on the anniversary of the March revolution. Out of one of the windows was hanging a red flag with the inscription "PSR" (Socialist-Revolutionary Party). This alarmed the *Tchekists*, who demanded that the flag be lowered and handed over to the authorities. An emphatic refusal was met by the threat that force would be used. But in spite of this opposition, the Red Army soldiers were not brought to the prison corridor: they just marched demonstratively through the open doors and settled themselves on the outer staircase.

Life ran on in comparative "calm," when about 1 A. M. on April 22 (1924—*Ed.*) both corridors—the solitary one and the common corridor—were overwhelmed by Red Army soldiers, and a search was carried out in all the cells. A search is an every-day occurrence in prison, but this time the "G. P. U." attempted to break certain generally recognized rules.

The *Tchekist* Kvashnin, having finished his search in the cell of the Socialist-Revolutionary J. P. Volk-Shtotzky, was going to leave without having made an inventory of what he was carrying away; Volk-Shtotzky asked that such an inventory be drawn up; upon the refusal of the *Tchekist*, he tore away from his hands the papers which the *Tchekist* intended to carry away. Kvashnin called for help a number of red army soldiers. Volk-Shtotzky attempted to defend himself with a stool, but was thrown on the floor; the soldiers began strangling him, squeezing him to the trestles of his couch. The noise and the choking cries drew the attention of the other prisoners who rushed to their friend's aid and attempted to break open the door of the cell and release Volk-Shtotzky. The wardens then drew their revolvers; rifles clicked. The "starosta" of the solitary corridor, S. N. Nikolayevsky, immediately demanded to see the chief of the local "G. P. U.", Korostin, who was directing the search in the common corridor, and proposed to him in a rather premeptory tone to stop this violent outburst. Korostin gave the order that the necessary inventory be drawn up, while telling Kvashnin that he should have shot Volk-Shtotzky when the latter "attacked" the *Tchekist*.

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The incident becomes the more interesting because of the fact that everyone of the searchers had in his hands—without ever having shown it to anyone—the following instructions:

"Comrade.....

"You are entrusted to carry out on the 22nd of April, 1924, a most careful search of the political prisoner of the Cheliabinsk isolator .....(so and so), locked up in cell No.....

"All copies, notes and manuscripts found in that cell and on the person of the prisoner should be taken away and packed up, after drawing up a detailed inventory of these. The packet must be tied by a piece of string, and an inscription be made on it as to the person to whom the contents of the packet belong.

"All the materials taken away as a result of the search, together with the inventory must be handed to the chief of the Secret Department, C. Filatoff, who will sign a receipt.

(*Signature*) KOROSTIN,
Chief of the District Secret Department of the "G. P. U."

Why Kvashnin and the other *Tchekists* acted against Korostin's instructions remains the secret of the "G. P. U." The commandant of the political isolator referred to the order issued by the assistant-procurator of the District, who was present during the search.

Upon the declaration of the woman Socialist-Revolutionary, Kurdyumova, that she would not allow a search in her cell, unless in the presence of the "Starosta", this same assistant-procurator replied: "What is it you want, then? You want us to use physical force against you? We can do that!"

On May 1st was organized, by the prisoners, and during their walk, a May-day meeting with speeches, reminiscences and songs. The authorities did not interfere, but about a half hour after the walk was over, the soldier on duty fired his rifle at the Socialist-Revolutionary L. I. Nevler, who had tried to look out of his solitary cell window. The bullet passed over his head and did not touch him.

The shooting was repeated on May 10. This time the target was the Socialist-Revolutionary N. V. Byakin-Vassilieff. The bullet missed again, although it smashed a window.... The soldier with the rifle threatened to shoot into the other window, but the noise and shouts of protest raised compelled the authorities to interfere. Korostin having been called out (by the prisoners) for explanations, attempted to turn the shouts of protest and the noise into an "obstruction". This having failed, he tried to justify the shooting by the "contravention of the rules and regulations" and by the insults thrown at the sentry—which was far from what had actually occurred. He then declared: "We have been shooting, we shall be shooting." In this he was supported by the representatives of the public prosecutor's inspection who were with him....

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Later, in the same month, the prisoners stopped receiving letters, while telegraphic inquiries by anxious relatives elicited the fact that the prisoners' letters never reached destination either. Korostin affirmed on his oath that he kept the letters in Cheliabinsk for a day or two; that it was, no doubt, the fault of the post. Some of the letters which took a month and more to travel from Moscow to Cheliabinsk, showed that Korostin's assurances were devoid of truth.....

J. BAT'KOVITCH.

THE BUTIRKY BEATING OF 1921 AND THE DESPATCH OF THE POLITICALS TO THE PROVINCIAL PRISONS (1921)

The beating in the Butirky took place only a few days after the publication in the official Moscow newspaper, **Pravda**, by Meshtsheryakov, of an account of his visit to the Butirky and the ideal conditions he found there. This prison occurrence, like that later catastrophe, the killing of the Socialists in the Solovetz camp, December, 1923, was clouded by controversy for a long time. Not until several years had passed was the actual event generally acknowledged. At times conditions seem to have been exceptionally good in the Butirky for the politicals, who had considerable freedom within the prison and many privileges. Such occurrences as this of the beating show how conditions can vary in the same prison from day to day.

These facts must act as warning against unreserved acceptance of official Russian statements about treatment of politicals. The quite recent inspection of the Butirky prison permitted foreign correspondents, and the subsequent favorable reports wired abroad as to the good situation of the politicals in the Butirky, should not be accepted as a completed picture. In this connection see also pages 217-218. The editor has copious material on the beating which he has omitted owing to lack of space.

TO THE PRESIDIUM OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SOVIETS

From the political prisoners: Soc.-Rev., Soc.-Dem., left Socialist-Revolutionarie's, S.-R.'s ("Narod" Group) and Anarchists imprisoned in the Central Isolation Prison of Orel.

Statement

In the night of April 25, a beating and violent abduction of political prisoners, Socialists and Anarchists, took place in Moscow, in the Butirky prison. About 3 or 4 A. M. hundreds of agents of the *Vetcheka*, accompanied by a large number of armed red army soldiers, invaded the 11th and 12th corridors, the Men's and Women's Wards, the hospitals and the baths. During the sleep of the prisoners, this turbulent gang broke into the corridors and cells with shouts and filthy oaths, brandishing their revolvers, forcibly dragging the inmates out of their beds, in their underwear, and beating them mercilessly. The beating went on anyhow, anywhere and with anything, women and sick persons not being excluded. With butt-ends of rifles and handles of revolvers, with fists and heavy boots; hands were twisted from behind, women were dragged by their hair, being pulled down iron staircases

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with kicks and knocks. All the protests remained in vain. The slightest resistance or opposition provoked the wrath of the *Tchekists*. To question as to where we are taken to, the *Tchekists* would answer with shouts and beatings, and would drag, undressed, barefoot, men and women, into the prison yard on the way to the common room, continuing the beating all the while with rifles, boots, fists. In individual cases this ill-treatment bore a truly brutal and cruel character. Thus, Anna Rosenberg was dragged out, ill as she was, by her hair, and beaten with butt-ends and fists. Kozlovskaya was beaten with heavy boots in the abdomen while dragged down the staircase into the common room, and then thrown unconscious into a motor-car. E. Kormilitzina had her head split by the handle of a revolver; she was beaten with rifle butts and was carried into the common room heavily bleeding; there she had to be medically treated. Avrutzkaya was beaten until she lost consciousness. E. Poletika was beaten with heavy boots upon her head until she lost consciousness. S. Trcitzkaya had a heart attack while being beaten, and the *Tchekists* carried her away in that state. Kashirina-Surkova, suffering from active tuberculosis, was dragged by the hair, her lips bruised and her teeth broken. Egelskaya was beaten with the butt-end of a rifle, her clothes torn on her; she was trampled under foot and dragged by her hair. Tzentilovitch had her hands twisted, her neck was squeezed and she was carried into the common room all blue and in bruises. Lea Gutman* was dragged by the hair and pulled down the staircase, the hair being pulled out. E. Ratner, who was in her cell with a 3-year-old child, was pulled away by her hair for having attempted to help the sick woman Rosenberg. Lubart, Kogan, Elman and many others were kicked and thrown into the common room in their underclothing. Chirin was dragged by his hair until blood came and was beaten with anything that came in the hands of his torturers. Ananieff, who suffers from hernia and eczema, was mercilessly beaten. Israel was seriously wounded and the *Tchekists* were compelled to send him away to be bandaged. Minkoff was bleeding all over, owing to his head having been repeatedly hit with the butt-end of a rifle; according to his story, the imprisoned Communists (from the 13th corridor), who had voluntarily joined the massacre, had participated in his ill-treatment. Puzyreff was bleeding from innumerable wounds. Gorokhoff was beaten over his head with the handle of a heavy revolver. Besides these facts, almost all the imprisoned Socialists and Anarchists were beaten with butts or fists. It is sufficient to enumerate the names of the sufferers to make clear the true dimensions of the pogrom perpetrated by the *Tcheka*: Shlyakhova, Protzenko, Belyayeff, Korshuncff, Volodin, Mirskoff, Arkhangelsky, Dershavin, Khudakovsky, Tabalin, Bryzgaloff, Devyatkin, Schwartz, Danilin, Pistrak, Kostin, Berlin, Abeshaus, Polonovsky,

*Many of the names occuring in the document, the reader will already be familiar with, many of them, occur again in subsequent sections.

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Lande, Yakobson, Kranikhfeld, Artemieff, Pazhanoff, Firsoff, Agapoff, Sinodalinoff, Egoleva, Makhova and many others. Some bruised, others in tattered underwear or in pants with torn vests, with no clothes or boots,—all were thrown, under an avalanche of swear-words, into the common room. Many were thrown into motor cars and brought to the station in their underwear only (Bazhanoff, Ananieff, Sinodalinoff, Artemieff and others).

Among those who had undergone beating and ill-treatment were sick prisoners. They were dragged from the hospital although lying in a feverish state. Among those who were beaten and carried away are to be found well-known leaders of the labor movement who had given years of prison and "katorga", under the Tzarist régime, for the cause of the working class. Among them are members of the Central Committees and Directing Bodies of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, of the Bund.

Thus, having perpetrated this outrage upon imprisoned Anarchists and Socialists, the agents of the *Vetcheka* ignored difference in sex or age, spared neither sick nor women, neither aged nor young people. Those who were brought to the common room were, without any distinction, thrown into cars and sent to the railway station for further despatch in various directions. About 300 persons were thus dealt with. Our party of 110 prisoners was brought to the Kursk railway station, loaded into four prisoners' carriages and, under reinforced escort, was sent away from Moscow without our being told the final destination. There were, among us, 32 S.-R.'s, 31 Soc.-Dem., 18 Left S.-R.'s, 17 Anarchists and 12 Non-party men caught in the general hullabaloo, among whom were 2 Hungarian war prisoners. Some of us had been sentenced to various terms of concentration camp; in the case of others, their trial by Revolutionary Tribunal was going to take place. One prisoner had already had his order of release signed by the *Vetcheka*. Locked in our grated carriages, without knowing where we were being taken and what our fate will be, we were compelled to remain the silent spectators of how the *Tchekists* who had accompanied us were telling the people who were crowding up the station that "Kronstadters" were being despatched and that "Kozlovsky" was among them. Speeches to that effect were delivered at Tula.

On April 27 at 6 P. M., we reached Orel. We were surrounded by an enormous detachment of infantry and cavalry and dragged through the town, the armed forces dispersing every now and then the assembling crowds, threatening to shoot at the slighest attempt to sing revolutionary songs. We were thus brought to the Solitary Wing of the once famous Central Hard Labor Prison of Orel.*

*See Shabalin's account of the same incidents in "My Two Escapes" on page 139.

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The old régime of the accursed Tzarist times has been preserved up to the present in this prison. The solitary cells are hermetically closed all the day long. There is but one bed for every two prisoners in each solitary cell. The second prisoner has to sleep on a straw mattress spread on the damp stone floor. The stink of the chamber pot fills the cell. The lavatories are utterly unfit for use and are centers of infection. There is neither electric nor parafin-oil lighting in the cells, and the prisoners are condemned to live without any light whatever. Water—whether hot or cold—is being supplied in flagrantly insufficient quantity. The bath was used for the last time in January. The feeding conditions are terrible. Bread is indigestible; it consists of saw-dust and straw; the dried vegetables are putrid; the cabbage is rotten. Medical attendance has evidently collapsed and our sick comrades (Lande—recurrent fever; Kostyushko—pleuritis; Kuznetzoff—dying of tuberculosis; Rosenberg, Kozlovskaya and others) who have not yet recovered from the Butirky ill-treatment are obliged to remain almost without any medical and medicinal help. It is necessary to add to this, the peculiarities of the régime. The prison is guarded from the yards and in the corridors by armed wardens. At an attempt, by a prisoner, to look into the yard—this happened on April 27, the sentry immediately fired at the window. On the morning of April 28, when the prisoner Vassilieff (who had spent 6 years hard labor under the Tzarist régime) knocked repeatedly at the door of solitary cell No. 67, the corridor sentry fired straight at the door, the bullet passing through the bull's eye window cut out in the door and hit the wall, miraculously missing a workman who had also spent many years in prison. These are the conditions of our detention. We learnt from a wire of the *Vetcheka* received by the Orel provincial *Tcheka* on April 29, that we were submitted to this cruel regime because of our "disgraceful behavior during the ill-treatment of red army soldiers with logs and bottles and for having smashed windows, etc."

It is enough to refer to the above-described eloquent facts of beatings committed by the *Vetcheka* before our despatch from Butirky, to show up the lie about the ill-treatment of red army soldiers, a lie which has been manufactured by the *Tchekists* for their justification.

On behalf of the political prisoners and having grouped together the above-enumerated facts, we establish once more and with thorough obviousness that the Communist Power, in its struggle against political opponents, resorts to cruel and cynical ill-treatment, sparing neither sick nor women, and inflicts upon us a heavy, torturing régime.

Before the Russian and international public opinion of the working masses we raise our decided protest against these violences, and

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brand with infamy the deeds of the authorities, reviving in the Communist torture chambers the bloody phantoms of the Middle Ages.

The representatives of the political prisoners:

"Narod" Group: SMIRNOFF, Socialist-Revolutionary Party: ARTEMIEFF, Russian Social-Democrat Labor Party: ARONSON, Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party: SHABALIN, Anarchists: BARON.

Certification

The above statement to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets was drawn up by me, Elder of the Social-Democratic prisoners, on behalf of the Committee of Elders of the Orel Prison after questioning all the 110 prisoners who had been brought from the Butirky, Moscow. The description of the beating and of the despatch were drawn up by the sufferers themselves a few days after the event (May 1 and 2). I certify hereby that this document was signed by the representatives of all the factions of political prisoners, namely: for the Social-Revolutionist, Nicholas Ivanovitch Artemieff; for the Socialist-Revolutionary Group "Narod", Nicholas Petrovitch Smirnoff; for the Left Socialist-Revolutionary, Ivan Andreyevitch Shabalin; for the Anarchists, Aron Davidovitch Baron; for the Social-Democrats, myself, Grigory Yakovlevitch Aronson, and was forwarded through the Provincial *Tcheka to* Moscow, to the Preseidium of the All-Russian Executive Committee of Soviets.

Berlin, January 2, 1925. GREGOR ARONSON.

Seal and Signature of Notary Public.

FATE OF THE BUTIRKY VICTIMS*

(1921)

Statement sent by imprisoned Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionists and Anarchists to the Presidium of the Valdimir Provincial Executive Committee of Soviets on April 30th (in copies to: Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets and People's Commissariats of Public Hygiene, Justice and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection).

"We, prisoners kept in the Vladimir Provincial Prison, consider it necessary to draw your attention to the anti-sanitary conditions which prevail in this prison. (1) The prisoners get no boiled water at all. Many of us who, in our long revolutionary life, had passed through many prisons, have never come across such an exceptionally disgraceful fact. (2) The lavatories are locked. Until lately, the

*The signers of this document were victims of the Butyrky beating who had been taken in prison cars to the prison in the city of Valdimir.

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prisoners had to perform their natural needs anywhere, in any corner of the yard. About ten days ago two pits (without any partitions) were dug out for the purpose; in a few days they were overfilled and an unbearable stench spread over the whole courtyard. (3) The well-water which the prsioners are compelled to drink unboiled, is turbid and muddy; besides, often enough there is no water at all in the well. The pits which replace the lavatories are dug 25 steps away from the well; thus the liquid and filth from the pits must inevitably filter through to the well. (4) There are no arrangements for washing oneself. When the well has water, the prisoners wash near the well, handing each other handfuls of water. Owing to this, the courtyard has become filthy and the dirty water, filtering through the soil, passes again into the well. (5) The feeding of the prisoners does not exist. The prisoners feed solely on 1 lb. of bread. The black and muddy dishwater with a mixture of fermenting sour cabbage and rotting potatoes, which is distributed twice a day—and which contains not a trace of fat, meat or fish—can only be called in derision a lunch or a dinner. Now and then—but not every day—does one get ½ oz. of sugar. That's all. (6) There is no lighting in the cells. (7) The bath and the washhouse are out of order; there is noplace to wash one's clothes and there is nothing to wash with, as there is no soap. The threatening character of the above-noted deficiencies become still more acute if one takes into consideration that more than 10 people are down with typhoid fever in the prison hospital, and that there is an epidemic of dysentery in the city which will inevitably find its way into the prison where it will spread like wildfire. Besides, the prison hospital lacks many of the most necessary instruments and chemicals. The Vladimir Prison is a disgrace to the penitentiary system of the Soviet Republic. It is in such a prison that the *Tcheka* locks up captured Social Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionists and Anarchists with the evident purpose of driving us to physical exhaustion, to wholesale infection and diseases and, perhaps, to death. It is with deep indignation that we protest against this savage policy which is powerless to break our devotion to the revolutionary banner under which many of us have been fighting for the last 15 to 20 years.

(*Signatures*)

MY TWO ESCAPES*

(1922)

When you approach Orel on board a train coming from Moscow, looking out from the railway carriage, you see on the right side, at

* The author of this letter, I. A. Shabalin, Left Socialist-Revolutionary, is also the author of "The Prison Without Bars", on page 111, in Part II. Considerable parts of this letter have been omitted, more particularly his account of the Orel prison hunger-strike, which is given in a preceding document.

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the outskirts of the city, a tall, white building, surrounded by white and red-brick outhouses, encircled by a white wall with small towers at the corners and in the center.

This whole vast establishment reminds one at first of a prosperous monastery—especially since there is a church very close to the "convent" itself.....

I, too, fell into this error. . . .

On the day of April 18, 1921, the special "passenger" train which consisted of three prisoners' cars and two coaches of guards was approaching Orel.

It was the result of a foul, base punitive measure against the Socialist and Anarchist prisoners.

The plan of the attack had been prepared in the Secret-Operative Section of the Lubianka, and in the night of April 26, 1921, a half-drunken band of 2,000 men swooped down upon the sleeping, defenseless political prisoners in the Butirky Prison (Moscow.—Ed.) which at that time harbored more than 300 of them. (See accounts of Butirky beating, page 134.—Ed.)

Especially did the Lubianka† Bashi-Basouks do their best in the female half of the prison. The first attack of the *Tchekist* "general" Samsonov was directed against the female solitary confinement building. Women were seized in their underwear, pulled off the bunks, beaten, dragged by the hair from their cells into the corridor. Some were pulled by the legs, so that their heads had to count the iron steps of the staircase.

Even those of the prisoners who were sick or whose health was shattered under the pressure of physical torments, were not left in peace by the "stalwarts" of the regiment bearing the name of the All-Russian butcher, F. Djerjinsky. And in order to cover up the traces of the crime, the prisoners were transferred to various points in the provinces. There, in Yaroslav, Orel, Ryasan, they will raise no voice of protest. . . .

‡The Orel Provincial *Tcheka* met us with great pomp. Even before the arrival of our train, a number of meetings were held in the soldiers' barracks at which the leading local orators appeared and prepared the guards and soldiers for the reception of the "bitter counter-revolutionists" who required particularly zealous watching.

Considerable military detachments were at the station to meet us. All traffic along our route was suspended. Thanks to such solemnity, there was a large crowd of curious people awaiting our train.

In charge of the entire operation was the commandant of the *Tcheka*, Loyolo, a former German sergeant, a prisoner of war, who found a new "fatherland" and, above all—a profitable place.

† A Moscow prison.
‡See page 136.

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"I forbid you to sing. If you sing, I will order the men to fire. This is not the Butirky," announced Loyolo.

"We sing only revolutionary songs."

"None whatever!" retorted Loyolo, all red, his moustache pointing upwards, bustling and issuing orders.

"And the Internationale?" one of our boys remarked jestingly.

"Not even the Internationale."

Previous to the warning given by Loyolo, our "elder" had decreed that we were not to sing on the streets of Orel, and his order was binding for our entire community.

Surrounded by a dense ring of guards on horse and on foot, our procession started out for the prison. Those of us who were gravely ill and those who had been wounded in "the last battle" were carried before us.

There were crowds on the side-streets and alleys, even as at the station. There were groups of people at the windows and even on the roofs.

When we came up to the Central Prison, Petrov laughingly shouted to me:

"Your wish has been fulfilled. You can rest now, and surely more than a week." The monastery turned out to be the Central Prison.

The Orel Prison

The Orel Central Penal Prison was at all times and seasons regarded as a "model" prison. In the "good old days" rebellious prisoners were sent here to be tamed. Here, as nowhere else, was the whip used freely, tracing bloody patterns on the backs of the prisoners.

Thanks to the care of the Communist government, this venerable institution no longer bears the terrible name of Penal Prison, but has been re-christened "The Orel Central Isolation Prison." The portraits of the hated tzars and tzarinas have been replaced, it is true, in the old frames, by those of the personages "dear" to the heart of every workingman and peasant: Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotzky.

. . . And here, as nowhere else, gross violence has blossomed forth like a thick growth of weeds, and the all-powerful bribe reigns supreme.

It is difficult to believe, but it is a fact, that in the period of "military communism" no bread was given to the prisoners in this "model" prison for months at a stretch. The food consisted of rotten potatoes, gruel or a kind of sour cabbage-soup. It was well that this "Lent" happened in the summer. In the winter the prisoners could not have withstood it, as the prison was unheated. There were days when there was no wood to make a fire in the kitchen.

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....In the course of "diplomatic" negotiations our committee of elders presented a demand to the chief of the *Tcheka*, Poliakov, and to the director of the prison, Saat: "A bath not less than once in two weeks." Saat, in spite of his exterior calm, nervously remarked: "This is impossible; my prisoners have not had a bath since January, and I don't know when it will be possible to give them one." This was towards the end of April.

The life of the criminal prisoners here is oppressive, horrible. In the halls of the criminals and in their cells the prison-guards are trading with "live stock" for a bread ration, for a small package of tobacco. Prostitution has burst into full bloom, and venereal diseases are being spread.

. . . Every day scores of hungry prisoners were punished by short rations. These were largely the poorest wretches, candidates for the morgue. The "bourgeoisie" adapted itself, thanks to the presence in force among the prison officials of monarchists who succeeded in disguising themselves as "Communist sympathizers," and also thanks to bribes. The local profiteers would conduct their commercial affairs from prison, sometimes they would be permitted to go home for the night—for a consideration. Only those who possessed nothing or who did not want to humiliate themselves, were left to maintain the old prison traditions.

There is almost no medical assistance. It is true there is a doctor, but he would not approach a patient closer than within three feet. Besides, of what benefit could pills and powders be when first of all food was needed? Only such cases were taken to the prison hospital as were doomed to die in a few days or weeks.....

The first day of our arrival at the Orel Central Prison, our committee of elders, during the negotiations with the local authorities, and subsequently, all the political prisoners, numbering 110 people, came to the conclusion that sooner or later it would be necessary to wage an obstinate struggle for tolerable conditions of existence. According to the instructions of the All-Russian *Tcheka*, everything was forbidden to us.

The "solitary" building, in one of which wings two floors were put at our disposal, was poorly furnished. Much that was indispensable was lacking. There was no light of any kind. In the damp cells there were only single bunks, when in most cases two of us were put in a cell. The water and sewer pipes were not functioning. Tea kettles and other dishes were not to be had at first. The only thing we received were mattresses stuffed with fresh straw, and only later were we given "bed-linen" and dishes. The food was below any criticism.

. . . We succeeded in securing, in spite of the instructions of the All-Russian *Tcheka*, a minimum of privileges by "peaceful" means. After locating the weak spots, we hit at them hard. We knew too well

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that the administration was "interested" in the supplies, and was trying to keep outsiders from controlling them. We made an effort to secure control over our kitchen. Then Saat and Poliakov promised us a separate kitchen, which we received. . . .

The morning following our "peaceful" negotiations, the guard on duty at the corridor opened fire at the cells. It appeared that the administration had neglected to inform the guards that in accordance with the "agreement" we had "privileges": the cells of the elders were not to be locked, and they were to distribute food, books, etc. The self-control of the comrades was amazing. Refusing to take the bread and hot water, the men nevertheless restrained themselves from making insulting remarks to the guards. The "misunderstanding" was soon cleared up, although it might have had sad results, as one of the loyal soldiers fired through the door into the cell where Vasiliev, who had done penal servitude under the Tzar, was confined....

Firing at the windows—this was almost a daily exercise of the deceived, hungry, ragged "heroic" conscripts of the Red Army, wearing bast shoes. The communist officers had instructed them not to permit the "internal enemies" to sit on the window sills, nor to engage in conversation, nor to pass notes among themselves.

Firing at the windows was not only encouraged as "an act of valour," but rewards were given, boots or watches, for hitting the mark. Thus, in the first days of our stay at the Orel Prison, our ward was for several days guarded by one of these heroes, the Keeper S., who was shod in new boots which he received for distinguished service—on the "internal front." He had killed outright a lad imprisoned on the ground floor of the building in solitary confinement, because the boy dared to look out of the window. . . .

The Four Condemned to Death

. . . In the other wing of the building, which could be seen from our window, on the upper floor, in two secret cells, there were four peasants condemned by the "revolutionary tribunal" to death.

They were sitting and waiting. . . .

But they did not have long to wait. In a few hours their two days of grace would be at an end.

In a few hours the cell would be opened, the dim light of a kerosene lamp would appear. Drunken men would come and say: "Collect your things," removing anything of value, and, perhaps leaving them in their underclothes, would drag them off to slaughter.

. . . Within a few score of feet, in the "civilian" cemetery, a grave had already been prepared. The graves were dug by the criminal prisoners. There were cases when they had dug them—for themselves.

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Suddenly a bold voice cut the evening calm: "Are you asleep?" one of the condemned men asked.

"No," Petrov, who occupied the cell next to ours, replied.

"We, too, are awake, waiting for the 'comrades' to call; our time is soon up."

"Perhaps they won't take you?"

"They will take us all right. . . . We are ready. We were ready even before the 'trial.' Only today one of our comrades suddenly began to cry for his little son." . . .

The dead walls concealed from us the weeping father and we did not hear his sobs nor did we see his tears. But we all felt the tragedy. We felt even the cries of the "little son" for his father.

. . . "Of course, one need not speak of it," the same man resumed. "It's a pity about the boy; the father's heart knows that he will have a hard time," and turning his head away from the window, towards the interior of the cell, he said to his comrade, in a caressing voice:

"Now calm yourself, take yourself in hand; better lie down and get an hour's sleep. One must go bravely to death."

"Have you written an application to be permitted a last meeting with your people?" somebody asked.

"Yes, but it will hardly be granted. It seems that nowadays this is not the practice," was the calm answer.

During the more than two years that I spent in five Communist prisons and in several houses of isolation, hundreds of people were taken before my eyes to "be put against the wall."

There were old men, women, youths. There were sick persons, insane people. There were almost children. . . . Never were any of them permitted to speak their last word of good-bye. From the Communist point of view this was a "bourgeois prejudice." The Communists, of course, must not copy the methods of Tzarism.....

And now, fifteen years later, after two great revolutions, after two solemn acts abolishing capital punishment, there is a father waiting for his "little son" to come to bid him his last farewell. . . .

"But now it is not the practice."

The conversation between us and the condemned four lasted a long time yet.

"You see, we are not sorry to have to die, but we are sorry that these scoundrels remain to drink our peasant blood. That's what hurts."

From the conversation it appeared that the condemned man had done penal servitude under the Tzar for slapping an officer while in the army. He had been condemned to capital punishment, but the sentence was commuted to penal labor, and only the revolution set him free.

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He was and remained a believer in the rule of the Soviets, but against the Bolshevist, watered "Soviets," he waged an obstinate struggle which turned into revolt.

In spite of the fact that he had only several hours to live, he displayed live interest in political questions. He inquired where Maria Spiridonova and Victor Tchernov and others were. It was long after midnight when our conversation came to an end.

. . . At dawn, the death prisoners were taken out to be shot. One of them made a dash and succeeded in escaping from the cemetery. This fact the criminal prisoners conveyed to us.

Toward July our condition, materially as well as regarding the regime, improved. It is true there were many cases of provocation; it is true the firing at the windows continued, but we had the opportunity of spending more time out of doors, we received books, many of us were permitted visits from relatives.

Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, *Tchekists* arrived from Moscow to take part of the prisoners to the Yaroslav Central Prison and to inspect us and see how the instructions of the central *Tcheka* were carried out.

. . . All the Socialist-Revolutionists and six of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists, myself included, were called out. But the condition of my health was such that, in spite of the desire of the local authorities to get rid of me, I was left in peace.

The farewell we gave our comrades was unusually solemn and beautiful. For the first time beneath the vaults of the prison did singing reverberate with such powerful tone.

Renewed Persecutions

. . . Our comrades were led away. . .

And immediately, like a bountiful shower, repressive measures were poured out on our heads. The cells were tightly locked. The out-door exercise was limited to half an hour, so that we refused to avail ourselves of it. The firing at the windows became more frequent. The guards were augmented. The atmosphere was charged with battle, with blood. (The author here describes at length how the prisoners were forced to declare a hunger-strike.—*Editor's Note.*)

. . . In spite of the isolation, we had "secret radio" communication with the Anarchists and in extreme cases could get in touch with them. Once four of us had occasion to meet in Derzhavin's cell. Walking unsteadily, holding on to the railings (they were weak from hunger.—*Ed.*), we gathered there in order to discuss quickly in a military way the situation and to adopt some kind of a decision. . . . Everybody had in mind a common auto-da-fé. In principle we accepted this plan. Derzavin was delegated to penetrate into the

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"apartments" of the Anarchists and discuss with them the new method of resistance.

. . . It was necessary once for all to put an end to the tormenting mockeries of the ruling party towards its political enemies. . . . We, standing on the brink of the grave, exhausted by hunger and thirst, ready to put a lighted match to our straw mattresses and become ourselves blazing torches, were going to do this for those who were imprisoned in similar "red" jails and dungeons, and in the name of those new friends and brothers, who will follow us behind the bars, tread in our foot-steps and fight for the liberation of human individuality.....

It was calm, very calm, in prison.

I knocked at the wall—to Volodia. He replied: "Still alive."

And unwittingly one's mind reviews the gallery of those who participated in the present struggle.

Description of the Politicals

Here is our Pavlik Derzhavin, a young but well-disciplined fellow. He was not yet 19 when the *Tcheka* arrested him in February, 1919, for belonging to the Left Socialist-Revolutionists. He developed in prison. And I recalled his simple, sincere "confession" which he made in 1920 when the two of us were in the same cell. How much of simplicity, of purity there was in his desire to serve the Revolution!

There is Lida Surkova. All aflame with fight. The painful prison life and the constant fever gave her tuberculosis. She was coughing blood, but in spite of all the requests of the comrades that she should not participate in the hunger-strike, being sick, she would not consent.

Vladimir Petrov-Kormov—a man of great will-power, of firm character, direct and obstinate, but of a critical intellect. In 1920 he escaped from the Butirky Prison, to devote himself again to party activity. And thanks to his energy, his doggedness, the party gained much, when he returned to its ranks.

Ania Rosenberg—a young girl, sensitive, cheerful, a good, devoted comrade, coming from a poor Jewish family, she had seen much hardship in her childhood. I was amazed at her discipline, thanks to which she is now suffering from rheumatism. Tcharin had told me how she contracted it when they were active in the partisan movement. She was despatched to cross into Denikin's lines at all costs and deliver a packet to the staff of the partisans. It was autumn. Approaching the river, which was already covered with ice floes, she was observed by a sentinel, and was ordered to stop. She threw herself into the water and swam across to the opposite bank which was in possession of the partisans.

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And here is Olga Taratuta, an old revolutionary terrorist, grey like a lioness, one of the representatives of the terror which was strongly developed in Southern Russia in 1905-06. She was doing penal servitude when the Revolution came. Always courageous, jovial, her cheerfulness concealed in the wrinkles of her face a very poignant yearning. We knew one ailing string of her heart which we always avoided touching. She had a son, a grown-up boy. She lived very little with him; he grew up in her absence. How many times perhaps the heart of the mother would yearn toward her son. Serving a long, long penal sentence, she hid in her soul the hope of seeing him, of living near him for a while. In the penal prison, enveloped in the darkness of suffering, the anxious question would trouble her: Would he forgive, would he understand her noble aspirations, would he not damn the Revolution in the name of which his mother had "deserted" him? We learned that this did not occur.

. . . The authorities got wind of our plan to set ourselves on fire, and took precautions. In one of the inner courts a special detachment was placed ready at any moment to put out the unusual fire. . . .

(As a consequence, the plan of burning themselves alive, a mode of protest actually undertaken later by the politicals in Pertominsk —see documents in Part III, The Northern Camps—was given up, according to Shabalin. However, again according to his account, two of the women politicals, one of whom was Lida Surkova, persisted in going through with the original plan and were rescued only just in time. After that, the hunger strike was also abandoned as hopeless. This part of Shabalin's account has been condensed into this note to eliminate the too great detail in which he indulges.)

. . . The majority of the comrades were physically exhausted. They needed care and treatment. The hospital question therefore came up first. The prison hospital was alongside of the main building, and was under the management of the director of the prison. . .

Hospital Regime

Being in the hospital, one had occasion to become more familiar with the prison life and also to get an insight into the world of the criminals, although we were in different wards and had our exercises separately. In most cases, they were live corpses, pale, thin, with sunken eyes, always hungry. They were brought to the hospital to die, since it was nearer from there to carry them out. Sometimes three a night died. Within 30 or 40 feet from the hospital was a small morgue; except for the cross on its roof one would have taken it for a guardhouse. In its interior was an ikon of St. Nicolas the Miracle-worker, of rather fine workmanship covered with gold. There was a

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window in the morgue, but without bars. Apparently the authorities were confident that the dead would not escape.

Incidentally, I was the witness of the following scene. Two criminals in the courtyard were jesting, who of them would die first. This jest developed into a sharp quarrel. They did not want to die simultaneously, as then one of them would have to go to the cemetery without a coffin. Although the coffin was stained with blood, filthy and saturated with the smell of corpses, apparently such is the psychology of most people, that a dead person must have a coffin. The body would remain in the coffin only as far as the cemetery; there its contents was dumped into a hole and the coffin brought back to the morgue to await the next candidate. When three died in one day, or when the bodies for some reason would remain unburied for several days, they would be put on the bare floor until services were held and then taken out on a cart to which they were bound by rope and carried uncovered to the cemetery. I must say that the priest had free access to the prison and chanted his prayers over all the corpses.

Life in the hospital was not much different from the life in the prison itself. The only thing we were given more of was outdoor exercise. Officially we had the right to two hours outside, but we managed to be out longer. Our fate depended largely on the old keeper, Piotr Ivanovitch, who had served in the prison for 34 years. Sometimes he would enter into a conversation with us and tell about the old penal servitude.

"Say, grandpa, did you ever flog the prisoners under the Tzar?" one of us, Anton Shliakhovy, asked.

"When I was told to, I flogged," was the answer of this old cerberus who loyally and faithfully served Alexander III, Nicolas II, and Lenin.

The Plan to Escape

One day, while walking in the little court together with Mark, we began to discuss the possibility of escaping from the prison hospital. After going over all the plans and opportunities, we concluded that it was very difficult to escape because the hospital was guarded as much as the solitary confinement prison, that in the corridor there were day and night *tchekists* and keepers. Opposite our window, within thirty feet, was a sentinel. In the court there were four of them. Thanks to our isolation, it was very difficult to obtain all that was necessary to prepare the escape. There were many other obstacles, but we decided to act. We resolved to secure a little saw and another instrument, to saw through the bars, to crawl out into the court yard, to climb to the roof of the drug store and then across the outside prison wall. . . .

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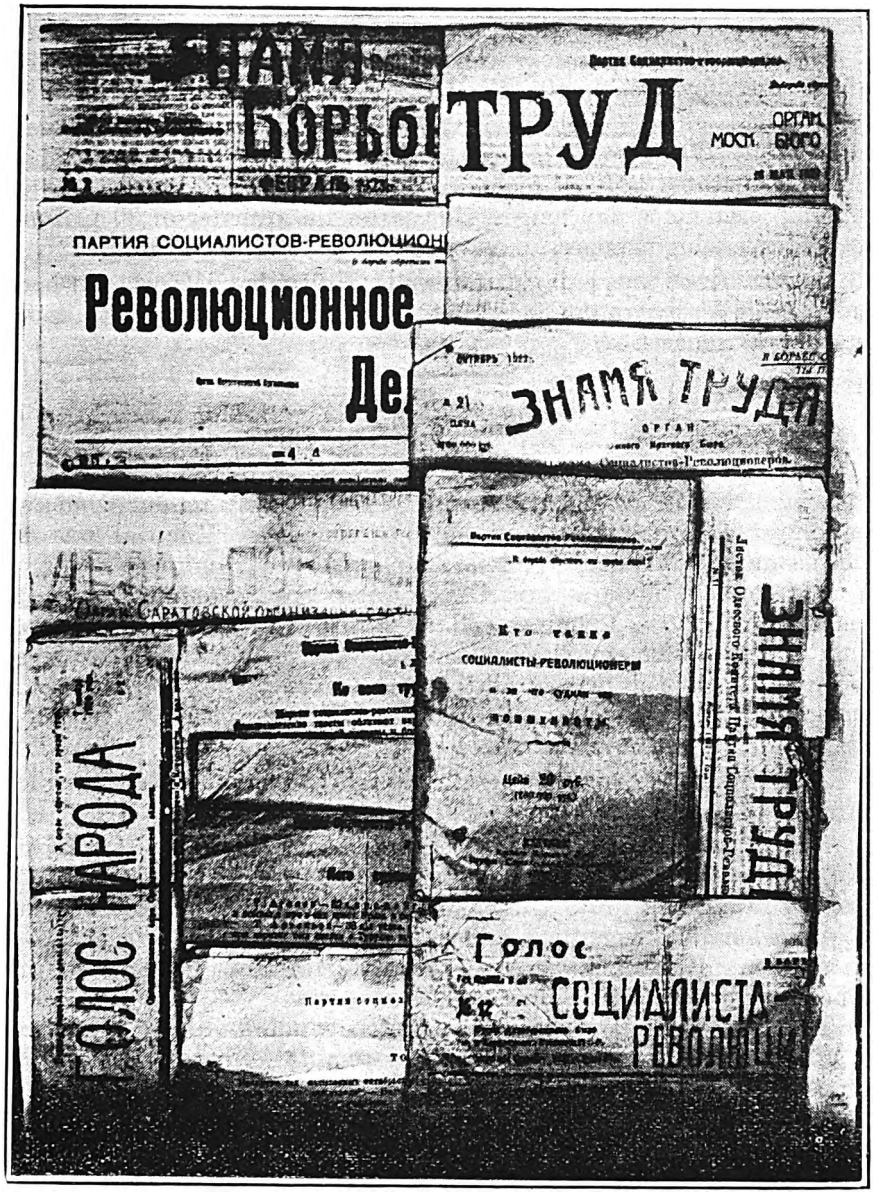

PHOTO OF TITLE PAGES (HEADINGS)
ILLEGAL SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONIST PARTY PUBLICATIONS IN RUSSIA

Candidly speaking, there was little chance of victory. We were anxious about the roof. We feared that as soon as we began to move over it, it would make a noise. But freedom lured us, the battle

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called. And as soon as we adopted our final decision, our entire existence was taken up preparing the plan. In spite of a . . . number of obstacles, the preparatory work progressed rapidly. One of the window-nettings was finally selected as point of attack.

On September 27, all the Mensheviks and non-partisan prisoners from the Don Basin were taken back to Kharkov. In our ward there remained, out of a total of fourteen, only ten. We could not postpone our plan even for a day longer, since after the transfer of 30 prisoners, we feared big changes.....

September 27 was a day of farewells, of firm handclasps. All had one message to give to the departing—to continue the struggle against the rule of violence.

The Escape

The bar was sawed through. . . . It was a dark night. There was a light wind. Behind the door, across the way from our window, the guards were quietly talking among themselves. The cell was in semi-darkness. The little kerosene lamp gave a weak light.

Had one of the most experienced jailers entered our cell at that time, he would have found everything in order. The prisoners were lying in their bunks, our belongings were not scattered, but we were already set for the event and all that was necessary was within reach. Some had on shoes of flax, others had their feet wrapped in long puttees, for our trip across the roof, to avoid making a noise.

. . . At two o'clock we start. There is a grave-like calm in the entire building. The court is peaceful, too.

"Boys, get up! It is time!" And in a moment everybody is at his assigned place. Nicolai Beliayev, a young giant, has begun to bend the sawed bar away. He labored a long time, but the bar would not give even to his gigantic strength. Out of breath, as if after climbing a steep hill with a heavy burden, he lies down to rest for a moment. Then again. Slowly it is giving way.

Dzing! broken glass came down on the window-sill, on the floor.

"Quiet, you devils, quiet! Away from the window, return to your bunks."

We all thought that the enterprise was lost. For a while we lay in waiting. It was quiet. The guards' attention had not been aroused.

Again we resumed the job.

"Quiet, there are steps outside!" Once more everything died down.

"All right, continue."

At last the damned bar which resisted all our efforts was bent out of its place. We stopped to listen. Calm everywhere.

"Go ahead."

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The first to crawl through was Mark,* since he had made a study of the laundry where it was necessary to open a window and drop a ladder, as well as to help Beliayev get through. Thanks to his size, Beliayev got stuck between the bars and could not move in or out. After long exertions he was pushed out.

The ladder was dropped from the laundry so that one end rested against the wall and the other against the garbage box. One of our men climbed to the roof. In a moment he was already on the roof. He lay down. A third one crawled through the bars. A second man reached the roof. In spite of all the precautions, the roof creaked loudly. Each step was distinctly audible. We held our breath. Again we waited a moment, thinking that all was lost. There was calm. No time to waste, and in a few minutes part of us were beyond the wall, part on the roof. We jumped straight from the wall to the ground. It seemed somebody was running in the dark, in the direction of the prison office.

It was a great moment. We felt ourselves the victors. Let there be a chase, let there be firing after us, let them shoot us—we were free.

There were three of us in one group. Instinctively we threw ourselves into each other's arms.

"Now, forward!" We passed by the little tower, the sentinel was not to be seen. There was one on guard at the barracks.

"Who goes there?"

"Comrades!" we replied. And around us was the dark night.

. . . . Suddenly there was firing. It must be from the tower. We were about a thousand feet away.

What is it—an alarm? Yes!

Another shot. We must get off the road. Possibly there will be a chase. . . .

We left the prison far behind us, but it was still dark. . . .

The road was very difficult, very hard, six days in the open. On the way we were caught in a snow blizzard. We were not only cold, but hungry. In the course of the six days the three of us had 17 pounds of black bread as food. But to compensate for it all we had our freedom.

The Second Escape

Not for long did I enjoy my liberty. In March, 1922, I was again arrested at one of our secret quarters in Petrograd. Together with me was also arrested my friend, Julia Zubelevitch,† the author of "Kronstadt in 1906," who was gravely ill. In a condition approaching unconsciousness she was sent to the "Gorohovaya," where she remained for three days.

*Mark Mratchny, Anarchist, now in Berlin.

†See her questionnaire, page 47.

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I will confine myself here, in regard to this arrest, to referring to my letter of April 9, which I stealthily and with the greatest difficulty wrote and smuggled out of prison that day. (See page 111.)

At the beginning of April, I received a note from Ania Sokolova in which she wrote that she intended to declare a hunger-strike demanding to be transferred to Moscow to one of the prisons where our comrades were kept.

An interesting scene took place between me and the soldier at the moment the note was delivered to me. Cautiously I talked to him, explaining the "crimes" for which I was arrested. He said much about the oppressive, arbitrary regime in the "Red" barracks, he told of his native village, how the authorities were robbing the peasants. We became friends and he was very indignant that I was so tightly sealed in the cork-cell.

He noticed, and I did not conceal it from him, that a note was handed over to me.

"It is forbidden to pass notes," he said to me.

"Is it?" I asked.

"Yes; I will not permit it."

"Very well, then I will not take it. Only one thing I will ask you. Shut the window-hole. Be a real jailer."

Nevertheless, I received the note. At night the same soldier was on duty. I did not sleep, as it was unbearably cold in the cork-cell. I walked.

The window-hole opened.

"You don't sleep?" the young soldier, almost a child, asked.

"Shut the window-hole. I cannot talk to you any longer."

"Listen, comrade, I want to beg your pardon. I am very pained that I acted in such a manner." And for a long time yet he asked for my forgiveness.

"I am not angry at you, but I should like you to be a good friend to all the prisoners." And stretching out his hand, he promised it to me.

Ania's hunger-strike yielded results and on April 14, at ten in the evening, we were called to the commandant's office.

At midnight we were already in some hotel, the headquarters of the Railroad *Tcheka*. There were four prisoners and we had a guard of four soldiers and two *Tchekists*.

At half past twelve the train started for Moscow. We were in a passenger coach of the third class, occupying a separate corner which was not accessible to free citizens.

There was Easter in the air. The passengers were talking only about Orel. There were students among them, "soviet" typist-girls, and workingmen who still had ties in the village. We, too, were being taken to welcome Easter at the....Lubianka (Moscow prison.—Ed.).

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My mind, my senses would not conceive the fact that I was again being convoyed to prison, that again I would be torn away from life.

"I must escape," blazed through my mind. But how escape? All the roads were cut. Through the window? But this would be madness, and the chances of success very small, especially since the window in our section was boarded up.

A thought flashed through my mind. To seize the revolver of the commissar, to cause a panic and take advantage of it. The chances were slim, and they might shoot some of my comrades. But I decided to escape. If I had no chance on the road to jump out of the railway carriage, then I would try in Moscow.

"Ania! Give me your hand, I will tell you whether you have sclerosis or not," I said, taking her hand.

"What sclerosis, what else will you invent?"

To tell the truth, I had not the slightest idea about sclerosis, but I needed to take Ania's hand, to clasp it, to bid her farewell. We firmly shook hands. With my eyes I indicated the window. She divined my purpose, and with a silent look blessed me for this super-insane step.

I decided to ask to be taken to the toilet about fifty versts from Moscow and then throw myself out of the window.

Time moved slowly. The night was dark.

"Let's go to the toilet," I said to the convoy. Two of them accompanied me. I noticed before that when, any of my comrades went there, only one guard went along. But, when I asked to go, a soldier and the commissar himself or another *Tchekist* would take me. Apparently they were informed of my "weakness" for escapes.

Night. Darkness.... The train is going full speed. I am ready. In full control of myself, without a quiver, I first struck the hand of the soldier holding a light for me, and then bolted the door inside.

"He's escaping! Escaping!" the soldier bellowed, overcome.

"Yes, I'm escaping!"

Immediately I was at the window. I let my legs hang over the sill. They were firing in the coach. The train was running. While hanging out of the window, the wind tore my cap off.... Motionlessly I lay along the railroad tracks.

There were shots nearby, very near. The train stopped. The accursed Westinghouse brake instantly stopped the flying monster.

"I must run, I must run," I whispered to myself, but there was no strength to move. "If I could but turn off the road." There were shots in the vicinity, voices. A few feet away from me was the train.

It occurred to me that I would be shot on the spot. Or, what is even worse, I would be taken captive alive again. No, I preferred the first.

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Biting my lips, moaning, I tried to raise myself. I felt as if I had been buried, but in reality my head was bare and I saw in the sky beautiful, sparking stars.

I raised myself. Walking unsteadily and holding on to the coaches, I moved ahead. There were alarmed passengers on the platforms inquiring what had happened. I turned aside and went down into a ditch. I had no more strength to proceed further. I crawled on all four down the slope. The train was still standing there.

It would be difficult to say how much time I spent crawling and walking, but reaching the woods I selected a large evergreen tree, surrounded by bushes and lay down under it.

"Let this be my death-bed and my grave." . . .

Near, very near was the sound of church-bells. Ah, yes, it was Easter.

"How good that I can die a free man. Only one thing I wish, that the *Tchekists* should not find my body."

I do not know how long I remained under the tree, but the heart-attack passed away. I felt a new current of strength. My will pushed me on, to raise myself and go forward.

I walked, I fell, raised myself, and walked on. I was at a stream. It was necessary to cross. Cold or deep, I did not inquire, but cut straight through it. I drank much of the water, which submerged even my shoulders. Very well, we could swim a little. On the opposite bank I rested again.

The whole left side of my body was aching. One arm was apparently broken. Later this was confirmed. I had to look for refuge and, above all, a cap. My bare head would attract too much attention. And in the first village, in the first cabin, a peasant woman presented me with a cap.

"Thank you, dear soul!"

Moscow was in sight. I was in Moscow, swallowed by work and freedom....

I. A. SHABALIN.

GOVAR LETTERS

(October, 1924)

To the Joint Committee for the Defense of Imprisoned Revolutionists in Russia.

Dear Comrades:

I hasten to inform you of the sad news, namely, of the arrest of my husband, a member of the All-Russian Federation of Anarchists, Constantin Vladimirovitch Govar, which took place on October 16, 1924. His crime consists in that he, in the eyes of the Bolshevik authorities, is—of course, for them—a socially dangerous element. The

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result of the arrest will be most likely exile somewhere or *strict isolation.* At the present time he is still under guard in the city of Mozir. What is going to happen is not known. On the whole it can be said that another victim has been added to the long list of revolutionists persecuted in Soviet Russia.

During the search that preceded the arrest, there were taken literature, letters, and so forth. Comrades, in the name of brotherly solidarity, organize everywhere protests against such acts of suppression of human rights, organize and demand the *liberation of the imprisoned* and suffering revolutionists in the prisons of Russia. Spread broadly the lists of the arrested. Let the foreign workers know what the Bolshevik, Communist Workers' and Peasants' (Government.—*Tr.*—omitted). Of the following developments I shall keep you informed immediately.

Write to the address (Address follows, in the original hereby attached. Not to be published.—*Tr.*)

With fraternal greetings, yours

LIUBOV L. GOVAR.

P. S.—My husband was of late a correspondent of the Anarchist publicatins, the English *Izvestia* and *Golos Trula.* (Anarchist publications in America.—*Tr.*)

Station Kalinkovitchi
October 21 1924.

Second Letter

(December, 1924)

Dear Comrades: Your letter reached me, I am sorry to say, after I had already been arrested. However, I shall try to reply to you on the main points.

So I begin with the most important. My husband, Konstantin Vladimirovitch Govar, member of the All-Russian Federation of Anarchists and member of its Secretariat, correspondent of Russian Anarchist papers "Potchin," "Golos Truda," and "American Izvestia," was arrested on the night of 15-16 of October of this year. The arrest took place by order of the authorized representative of the "G. P. U." of S. S. S. R. for the Western District. In the search that preceded the arrest there were taken almost the whole Anarchist literature, and—what is more important—legal literature, correspondence, letters, some issues of the "American Izvestia," "Golos Truda," various manuscripts, etc.

At the present time my husband is in the inner prison of the "G. P. U." of White Russia. In connection with this case they have arrested besides myself, twenty Anarchists from various parts of the Western District. All are kept where my husband is.

. . . My husband was born in 1900, has average education, basic profession that of teacher. The first years he worked in the coopera-

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tives and also at the same time in the union as its secertary. He has been now arrested the second time by the Soviet authorities for his opinions.

. . . Of the number of the arrested I consider it necessary to mention the following: (1) M. I. Sednev, worker; (2) N. T. Tcherenok, employee; (3) I. F. Bobr, peasant; (4) A. A. Litskevitch, peasant; (5) P. Iurinko, worker; (6) Likhtenko; (7) Giurov; (8) Baliunkevitch, worker; (9) Rodkevitch, student. About the others, later, because of lack of space.

December 10, 1924 LIUBOV GOVAR.
City of Minsk, Inner Prison of the G. P. U.

Third Letter
(January, 1928)

Dear Comrade:

First of all, I inform you that Liubov Ignatevna Govar has been arrested and is with her husband, Konstantin Vladimirovitch Govar, in the City of Minsk. The money which you sent to her name was received by me, as authorized by her. The health of Konstantin Vladimirovitch is generally such as (is the case) in prison; and besides what health can one have in prison?

At first they were under arrest by the G. P. U. B. ("G. P. U." of Belorussia—White Russia. *Tr.*) but now they have been transferred to prison.

There is nothing more to write.

Write to the following address: (Address given. *Tr.*)

LEONTIY VLADIMIROVICH GOVAR
(Brother of the arrested Konstantin Govar. *Tr.*)
Station Kalinkovitchi
January 14, 1925

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

Letter Written by F. B., Moscow, April 2, 1924:

"As you know, Izia (J. Braun) is no more in Suzdal, but in Yaroslav Prison. The conditions there are such, that Suzdal seems to be a paradise.

Instead of the concentration camp—hard labor prison, solitary confinement, absence of common walks with the other inmates, locked cell, walks in a tiny yard 3 x 2, covered with human excrements and kitchen refuse. He is forbidden to walk on the asphalt, but must walk in this stinking mess; electric lighting day and night, exceptional abuse of the peep-hole, complete absence of opportunity to work, as the noise all the day long in this purgatory gives no chance to concentrate one's thoughts. His health is giving way alarmingly.

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The counter-revolutionists who are kept in this prison (there is not a single Socialist, the prison being for common law criminals) have the right of intercourse, while he is kept under lock and key, with a "special" guard attached to him. . . .

From a Letter Written by I. A., Moscow, April 3, 1924:

A few days ago, 65 Petrograd students, "cleared out" of the Universities, passed through Moscow, on their way to Solovki. They walked from the station to the Taganka prison, singing the Marseillaise and other revolutionary songs, and shouting: "Down with the Bolshevist oppressors!" They go into banishment as for a holiday....

There are many arrests among the Moscow students as well.

Sixteen Left Socialist-Revolutionary internationalists were arrested and some members of the Union of Left Socialist-Revolutionists and Maximalists. Among them are: A. Radutzkay, Maria Vetrishtshak, Davydova (non-party). Searches were made in the room of the student Pupysheff and of Smelyakoff.

J. Braun is on his twelfth day hunger-strike in Yaroslav prison. The reason is, so far, unknown.

From An American-Russian:

Dear Comrades:*

Don't be surprised if suddenly you get a letter from me. Many times I thought of writing to you, to tell how we are getting along and what we are doing in Russia. I didn't write because while I was free there was no way of communicating, and when there was a way, I was in jail.

Especially did I long to write to you because I still remember your last letter to me in Chicago, the time you sent me the credentials from the M. E. It was just before I left for Russia, which was in May, 1917. You envied us because we were Russian born and that we were lucky that we could go to a country where there would be freedom for the working class. We all thought the same. Yes, it was the time of enthusiasm, we were to be envied, because we bravely fought the battles for freedom on the Russian fields; but my dear friend, the lucky ones are not those who come to Russia—oh no!

I went through a lot of fighting, was wounded many times, and how I am paid for all I went through—jail, jail and jail again.

Since 1919 I am hunted for like a wild beast, spied after and frame-ups made. The last arrest was the most cruel, though the most foolishly fabricated one, and when I proved it to them, I was plainly told that I was arrested because I might be active in the future.

*The writer of these lines finally got out of Russia into Poland, where he was arrested and jailed as soon as his identity was discovered, because he was considered too "bolshevik".

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A verdict was brought against me. I was to be exiled to one of the worst places in the world called "Narimsky Base." In protest against this sentence, I hungered 28 days, and then at the end of the 28th day they started to feed me by force artificially. I preferred to die in a Moscow jail than to die on the way to the wilderness.

After five days of artificial and forcible feeding, I was finally, in a dying condition, brought home on the guarantee of a high government official. He took the responsibility to get me back after three months to the authorities to be sent away to the "Narimsky Base".

My left side, from the toes up to the arm, is paralyzed, but this will not stop their sending me away as soon as the three months will expire.

I am home, but materially very badly off. I am short of food, necessary medicines, and care of doctors. Rose and Esther are also invalids of the struggle for freedom. Rose is left with a stiff leg and swollen arteries on both legs—she must undergo an operation. Esther can't obtain work because she doesn't know Russian well enough. The boy is only 11 years old, they only depend on my earnings, but my present condition is terrible, as jails and only jails took my health away, and as that is not enough, I am to be sent away, never to see the white bright world again.

Immediate help is needed. Do for me what we used to do for others.

I remain fraternally yours,

Aprli 3, 1923. M. C.

A NOTABLE INSTANCE*

Sergei Morosov, one of the Socialist-Revolutionaries tried at Moscow and sentenced in 1922, committed suicide in prison in Moscow in December, 1924, as a protest against the treatment of himself and comrades in prison. Morosov's fate is peculiar in that he died in prison as he was born there. His mother, sent by the Czar to Schlusselberg Fortress, had given birth to her only child in that prison.—*Ed.*

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*Other material as to prison conditions will be found scattered throughout the documents in this volume. Little space has specifically been devoted to the Moscow "inner prison" of the *Vetcheka*. It is mentioned frequently both in those documents printed in this volume, and those which have had to be omitted. In the protest by Madame Peshkova's Red Cross in 1921 to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (see page 223) will be found some descriptions of this jail. Some of the Zionist-Socialist questionnaires, which refer to occurences of last year, also describe conditions as bad in that jail. In fact these questionnaires (see the one reprinted on pages 292 and 293) show that even as recently as last year conditions for the politicals in the jails were very bad.

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Part III

The Northern Camps

NOTE: The material printed in this section covers principally the four northern camps, Archangelsk, Pertominsk, Kholmogory and Solovetz. The first three of these camps seem to have been abandoned insofar as they were concentration camps for political prisoners. Solovetz, the camp on the islands in the White Sea, within the Arctic Circle, actively functioned until recently as one of the chief points where political prisoners were sent. There has been much controversy with regard to this camp, both as to the treatment of the prisoners and the so-called "massacre" of politicals which took place on December 19, 1923. Recently appeared in the American press an Associated Press dispatch (in the month of June) stating that, owing to the controversy about the Solovetz camp which had given rise to much agitation abroad, the demand of the politicals that they be removed to the mainland was granted and the political prisoners would be removed to the main land; that nevertheless the Soviet government did not admit as true the charges of maltreatment of the politicals in Solovetz. This news was published when this book was already in press. It has been impossible to secure more definite information as to the time, when and the place whither, the politicals will be removed.

In addition to the four camps above-mentioned, there are others, in the far north and elsewhere, notably Suzdal where political prisoners are sent and about which we have little detailed information.

A PLEA TO HUMANITY

Dear Friend,*

I wanted to write you this letter six or seven months ago, as soon as the first news of the December† events on the Solovetz Islands reached me. I did not write because it is painful to speak of that subject and because it is somehow not customary to occupy the attention of one's comrades with prison affairs.

But months have passed already,—extraordinary, unforgettable "Solovetz" months,—and I feel that I must violate the old prison traditions and write to you—cry out!—about Solovki, to you personally,

*This private letter is from a well-known socialist leader now in prison in Russia. It poignantly illustrates the special mental anguish of the Russian revolutionists imprisoned by a revolutionary government and therefore aptly serves as an introduction.

†The massacre of socialist prisoners in the Solovetz camp. See page 194 et seq.

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intimately, as I would write to no "organ" or "organization". . . . . I must do this because I feel almost with my physical senses the inevitability of a repetition of "December 19",† which is being intensively prepared by the "G. P. U." and which will unavoidably occur upon the closing of navigation if . . . if the Solovki‡ continue to exist and our socialist, workers' Europe does not raise its powerful voice in regard to the fate of its hostages.

The Solovki are now in a tragic impasse. I will not tell you of concrete and private details, since you have probably already received exhaustive information of that kind.

I want to tell you of the main and decisive factor concealed behind the concrete details, which forms at present the "soul" of the Solovetz problem.

This "main factor" is the hard and bitter consciousness of one's moral isolation,—a sense of some frightful airless space surrounding the Russian prisons and the Solovetz Islands especially—and this just at a period when the Government has passed from "words to deeds", from the political destruction of our parties to the physical annihilation of the socialists.

This complete isolation of the "hostages of the Second International" is felt with equal keenness by both sides, and it determines the basic character of their tactics: on the one side—the tactics of the last line of defence, marked by tragic episodes; on the other side—the cynical and cruel tactics of the triumphant conquerors sure of themselves. Without taking into account this "main factor", it is difficult to understand the hopeless Solovetz tangle.

It is difficult to understand how "December 19" could altogether have occurred; how this cruel physical blow could have been followed by a shower of moral blows; how it was possible to ignore this slaughter, abstaining even from the comedy of an "inquiry"; how, with the graves hardly closed there could have appeared signs of a further administrative offensive, of an effort to introduce penal servitude, a starvation ration and a multitude of limitations, humiliations, and cruel mockeries.

When the events of December 19 occurred, it seemed subjectively to all of us that the "world would be convulsed",—our socialist "world". But it appeared that it . . . did not notice the Solovetz events, and then a ring of laughter entered the tragedy. . . .

The bolsheviks are laughing. They are laughing cynically, confidently, and aggressively, in big and small deeds. In this lies the murderousness of the Solovetz problem. In this impudent and provocative laughter I sense the inevitability of a new tragedy.

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†Massacre referred to in preceding note.

‡Solovki is the shortened form of Solovetz, the name of the islands in the Arctic circle where the prison camps in which political prisoners are kept is situated. See map.

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Dear friend! I would be very sorry for myself and my comrades if you understood my letter simply as a human cry, "Save!" Such sounds do not exist in my soul; neither do they rise in the hearts of our friends. If it were only a question of human lives—this letter of mine would not be written. You know as well as I that the prisoners will firmly, under all circumstances, drink their cup to the end. Somehow they will get over their personal suffering; somehow they will bear the pain of their individual losses and they will not drop the banner. . . .

But what about the political side of our consciousness? How is it possible to drive out of one's mind the fact that the Solovetz tragedy is not a tragedy of individual, private persons, that it concerns an integral part of the most powerful Workers' International in the world? And why does this International keep silent when it dares not politically be silent?

It is this political, not personal, isolation that evokes the laughter of our enemies, poisoning with a bitter venom those who are behind the bars. And it is of that that I am driven to write to you. . . .

How much lighter would seem the sacrifices and how easy the road of our destiny, objectively speaking, would seem if during difficult moments we could know that every humiliation and every fresh victim would serve as a new weapon in the hands of the working class! . . .

Dear Friend! It is especially difficult for me to write in this manner to you. I should not like you or any of our friends to find in my words a personal rebuke for "inactivity". That was not my intention, and I would have no right to it.

Let this letter of mine, written to you personally, be a "spiritual commentary" to those data which have been sent to you from the Solovki. And no more. Without it, you might not have realized the new misfortunes that are threatening which I, knowing but too closely the technique of the internal relations existing there, can see.

In these very days perhaps the last forced struggle for the abolition of the Solovki as a place of exile has already begun there. . . .*

But I will end here.

Let my deep fear for the fate of our common friends, let my bitterness over the non-existing "international solidarity" and my deep friendship for and great confidence in you personally, dear friend, serve as justification for this letter.

(Signature)

September 8, 1924.

*The writer's premonition came true. Three weeks later, October 3, 1924, a hunger-strike of more than 200 political prisoners broke out on the Solovetz Islands. See also page 215.

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THREE ARCTIC CAMPS*

(December 1923)

"Somewhere at the end of the white world, on the shores of the icebound sea, where eight months in the year winter reigns, where for months the sun does not appear, there stands the God-protected Convent of Zosimo-Savvatievo."

Thus begins one of the numerous accounts published by the monks of the ancient Solovetz Monastery which has existed for nearly five centuries—it was founded in 1429—and was turned in the summer of this year into a bolshevist penal labor colony, into a modernized soviet Sakhalin. . . .

The first political prisoners—anarchists—appeared in Kholmogory† in February, 1922. This group, transferred in the spring of 1923, after a stay of one year in the camp, to Pertominsk† and later together with the rest, to Solovki,† has already run the whole gamut of all that the regime has to offer. It was necessary to wage a struggle for the most elementary things, such as conceding to the socialists and anarchists the ordinary rights of political prisoners. In this struggle they were subjected to all the known punishments, such as solitary confinement, beating, starving, throwing on the wire, organized firing by the military detachment at the building, etc., etc. It will suffice to say that at the end of the year the majority of the Kholmogory inmates could boast, in addition to their past records, of hunger strikes totalling thirty to thirty-five days, a third of which were "dry" strikes. (Abstention from drink as well as food.—Ed.)

The Petrominsk Struggle

The struggle of the Pertominsk inmates, — the first political prisoners had been sent there in December, 1922,—was of shorter duration. The "regime of Batchiulis" was broken towards the end of February. Locked cells; bare bunks; the shutting off of light, water, and heat; rations of common criminals; the ban on open-air exercises; firing at windows; the endless ringing of the alarm-bell, with the training of machine-guns on the quarters of the political prisoners; the attacks by Commandant Batchiulis, armed with a dagger, on individual prisoners—all of this was at that time "a closed page" of history. Part of the old administration, including the eminent Batchiulis, was removed. But it was quite clear to everybody that another struggle was ahead, the struggle for the abolition of the Pertominsk camp itself. This camp had an extremely insufficient num-

*This letter from the Solovetz Islands was written by a representative socialist exile in the first half of December, 1923, several days before the bloody event of December 19. It is a comprehensive review of the life of the political prisoners in the so-called northern concentration camps.

†See the map on page 17.

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ber of buildings fit even for half-human habitation. The locality, like Kholmogory, is especially infected with malaria. All the former inmates of Kholmogory transferred to Pertominsk were suffering without exception from malaria.

Our community† contemplated beginning the new struggle in the spring when it would be hard for the administration to isolate us completely from the rest of the world. However, the anarchists at the beginning of March commenced an independent struggle for their transfer from Pertominsk, which the remaining members of our community thought somewhat premature. On March 7, they sent telegrams to Archangelsk and Moscow demanding urgently to be transferred to Archangelsk. The urgency was dictated by the approach of the season of impassable roads, by the inability to secure medical treatment in Pertominsk for those seriously ill, and by similar reasons.

By March 15, (1923.—Ed.) the time-limit fixed in the telegrams, no answer having been received, the anarchists declared a hunger strike. Three days later there arrived in the camp three more anarchist prisoners, each of whom had just undergone in Moscow a hunger strike of fifteen days' duration, and they immediately joined the strike here. In a week the hunger began to show results. Already on the sixth and seventh days several people were in a semi-conscious state. The question arose as to swifter and more effective methods of combat. On March 22, about 11 o'clock in the morning, the sound of smashed glass was heard, the alarm bells began to ring. The clicking of muzzle-stoppers raised by the soldiers and guards surrounding the building reached our ears. The machine-guns menacingly lifted their snouts.

There was a smell of smoke from the corridor. It appeared that a number of hunger-striking anarchists, all men, locked themselves in a cell and piling up at the doors all kinds of junk, such as berths, mattresses, etc., poured kerosine over it and set it on fire. The officials who came running in a hurry completely lost their heads. The commandant was altogether absent—he was hunting at this critical time. The acting commandant, the right hand of Batchulis, Michelsen, who had won distinction in the Crimean executions and, who in spite of having been sentenced to capital punishment in some manner emerged in the capacity of the unofficial master of the destinies of the camp, broke open the door of the burning cell. The fire leaped into the corridor and began to attack the cells on the opposite side. The committee of elders issued an order to the prisoners to leave the burning building. The corridors were already so full of smoke that it was almost impossible to make one's way through them. Half an hour later there would have been nothing left of the building which was old, wooden and very dry. It is hardly necessary to describe the psychological condition of the political prisoners who had to assume the

†The political prisoners are organized in communities according to their various parties. Hence the reference is to the social-democratic group of exiles.

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functions of officials and prevent their fellow prisoners from carrying to a horrible conclusion the struggle they had initiated, and who could not look on with indifference while their imprisoned comrades were burning to death. And when one of the elders* ordered the fire put out, somehow everybody without argument formed instantaneously a chain which reached to the wall, while some rushed to the building with buckets of water.

The anarchists who remained in the cells were carried out. Towards the end the commandant appeared. At his order, all the anarchists were transferred to the hospital. Several hours later the hospital was completely isolated from the building occupied by the political prisoners. Nobody knew what was going on in the hospital. It was only known that the hunger-strike was being continued, that some of the strikers were in a rather serious condition. This state of affairs lasted for several more days.

From Archangelsk some kind of a commission, composed of the associate chief of the department of the northern camps, Nogtev, the procurator of the province and representative of the Soviet, deigned to pay us a visit. The arrival of the commission contributed nothing new. The tension grew constantly. For hours people clung to the windows, trying to gather from the different indirect signs of the camp-life something about the character of the events which in their opinion might be occurring in the hospital. Finally, on the 30th, the sixteenth day of the hunger-strike, there arrived from Moscow a commission consisting of a representative of the "G. P. U."† and a representative of the prosecutor's office, Kondurushkin, who modestly presented himself as "the Procurator of the Republic". In the morning of the 31st several guards and soldiers appeared at the bunk of each hunger-striker. All of them were bound and some were carried off for artificial feeding. Seventeen days of hunger had exhausted the anarchists physically to such a degree and the experiences of those days strained their nerves to such a state of fatigue that the hunger-strike was automatically suspended. Thus the strike ended in failure. There could be no talk of abolishing the Pertominsk camp in the near future. Life again began to enter, slowly, it is true, into the ordinary routine. About the same time the external "blockade" ended, too. In the first months neither letters from the camp nor letters addressed to the camp arrived, getting stuck somewhere in the office of the "G. P. U."

*Each organized community of political prisoners has its own elected "starosta" or elder. These authorized spokesmen of the several communities form a Committee of Elders. This whole system was in vogue in the Czar's time.

†The "G. P. U." pronounced "ge-pe-ou", is the present name of the old *Tcheka*, and is formed of the initials of the Russian words meaning the Political Department of the State. It is a kind of gendarmery with executive powers. See page 301 et seq. for decrees abolishing the *Tcheka* and establishing the "G. P. U."

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April, May and the first half of June passed in comparative peace. . . . There came a drift of warm weather. The last snow fell on May 31, navigation opened, new parties of prisoners began to arrive. The number of political prisoners was doubled in a very short time. We were extremely crowded. The additional buildings put at the disposal of the prisoners did not help much. The administration began to speak of the forthcoming transfer of the criminals to the Solovki and of the transformation of Pertominsk into a camp for politicals exclusively. About the middle of June the transfer of the common criminals to the Solovki actually began. The administration made an effort incidentally to remove as common criminals a number of comrades of the socialist community who were classified officially as non-partisan. But no one attributed any serious import to the rumors we heard concerning the transfer of the political prisoners to the Solovki. About this time Pertominsk had already acquired a notorious reputation everywhere, and it seemed that it could not be surpassed— — — — — —

Transfer to Solovetz

On June 29, (1923.—Ed.) Nogtev again appeared on the horizon. The committee of elders was called before him, and he announced that Pertominsk would be abolished, that according to order from Moscow all the political prisoners would be sent by a steamer which was due that night, to Solovki, where the best cloister had been set aside for them and where they would enjoy a regime of greater freedom. If the prisoners should refuse to leave voluntarily, he would transfer them by force and carry out his order from above.

Special meetings of the groups were called. The social-democrats by an insignificant majority expressed themselves against leaving and for resistance to the transfer, regardless of the consequences. The remaining factions, the socialist-revolutionists, the left socialist-revolutionists, and the anarchists decided by majorities that it was necessary for various reasons to leave without resistance. The consent of the community to the transfer to the Solovki was communicated to Nogtev.

The following day we hurriedly collected our belongings, embarked on the steamer and after a trip of about 16 or 17 hours across a rarely calm sea, one hundred and fifty Pertominsk political prisoners on July 1 (1923.—Ed.) hove to the "sacred" shores of the green Solovetz Island, at the landing-place of which are numerous picturesquely scattered monastic churches and buildings. Part of these, including the cathedrals and some other structures, had but very recently been devastated by fire.

Upon landing on the Solovetz soil we all felt that we were entering a new and strange phase of life. From conversations with common criminals we learned of the shocking regime which the adminis-

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tration is applying to them. There is no limit to their hours of servitude. They receive a real starvation ration, being fed largely with stinking codfish. Beating is practiced at every step upon the slightest pretext. Every keeper, barrack-warden, every petty official supervising the penal labor has the "right to the stick", i. e., the right to beat. The high officials do not even need such a right. They can beat whenever they like and with anything they please. For any insignificant offense punishments are employed hardly known even to the representatives of the exotic countries belonging to the Communist International: scores of criminals are stripped nude and put out for a period of four to six hours, towards evening, when the mosquitoes are especially numerous, "under the mosquitoes". Alongside, a special sentinel is placed whose duty it is to "observe" that the victims should not in one way or another drive the mosquitoes away. At the same time other "civilized" punishments were resurrected: the stone "bags" which have existed here almost since the days of Ivan the Terrible. The criminals are put for a week and sometimes for two weeks into the "bags"—narrow and deep pits in the stone walls, altogether without light, into which a man can be put only "at an angle".

After spending several hours at the landing-place, our baggage was piled on carts and towards evening, (which is a relative term, as this happened during the period of the white nights), we found ourselves at Savvatievo, situated at a distance of twelve versts from the station.

After the many harrowing experiences of prison life in Kholmogory and Pertominsk, upon our arrival at Savvatievo, our new place, we were all filled with the same wish: to utilize the short northern summer for recuperation; to gather strength for the coming hard winter of complete isolation, during seven months, from the outside world; to accumulate self-restraint in order to bear all the hardships, all the prison tragedies which, it seems to us, may occur when we are left here during the winter all alone with the little local tzars, composed of white guards, *tchekists** with criminal records, and various criminal and bandit elements, forming nine-tenths of the local administration and the so-called staff of keepers. These people are all corrupted with the feeling that they are responsible to no one.

Among the very numerous officials of the central department of the camps, which is located here at Solovki, and of the individual camps and cloisters, there are not more than half a dozen "free" men; all the others are exclusively prisoners of the aforementioned categories. Many of the middle and lower officials who had but recently received sentences of capital punishment which were commuted to ten years in prison, found themselves at the Solovki and here immediately became "personages". But even the "free" high officials are essentially not very much different from the others: they are *tchekists* and of

*Agents of the *Tcheka*, predecessor of the "G. P. U."

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course all communists, who had sinned in one way or another and whom the Communist Party or their respective departments disciplined by sending them to Solovki for correction and improvement. It is obvious that there could be no "career" in dealing with the common criminals, of whom there are four thousand here. There remain the politicals, on whose heads it is possible to earn redemption for one's sins. (The local official term "criminals" signifies all categories of prisoners, except socialists and anarchists, such as common criminals, condemned *tchekists*, speculators, peasants, etc. The prison in which they are kept is known as the "Kremlin").

We all arrived here, as I indicated above, under the acute need and desire of recuperating, even for a short while, in body and soul. The summer weather, the lake, the evergreen woods surrounding the cloister seemed to create the necessary atmosphere. Before his departure from Pertominsk, Nogtev assured the committee of elders that we would have at our disposal the lake and part of the woods, and sufficiently comfortable and spacious buildings. According to him, the Savvatievo cloister could freely accommodate three hundred persons. In reality it was quite different. The building assigned to us, even according to the standards fixed by the administration, (some kind of a commission examined the house before our arrival and set these standards), had room for about 100 or 110 people. It turned out to be as bad with the lake and woods. A tiny section of the lake-front was fenced off for us and the first attempt, the day following our arrival, to cross the little bridge into the woods ended with direct shots at one of the political prisoners. Only the tremendous self-control of the comrade who was the target, the left socialist-revolutionist Groshev, and of another comrade who cried to the sentinel: "Aim at the feet!" averted a bloody event on the second day of our stay at Solovki. At night the administration removed the little bridge which became known in the history of the cloister as "Groshev's bridge fortification". As to the woods, they were real woods, but beyond our reach. A part of the court, in area about one and a half desiatins (four acres), with a score of birches, was assigned to us, as well as an additional bit of the lake.

The very first day we had to fight already for the legalization of our right to walk about freely during all of the twenty-four hours of the day within the confines of our tiny domain. We had been promised this before leaving Pertominsk. After several days of bargaining with Nogtev, we secured for our accommodations another wooden structure, with room for about 30 persons, and the administration "owed" us eighteen or twenty persons, until finally the repair and adaptation for living purposes of various nooks and closets had been completed. A week later we settled in our cells, arranged things and entered upon a peaceful phase of life. We restored the school we had established at Pertominsk, the studies were resumed, whether

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in school or otherwise, we started to bathe, fish, row, play games, etc. We tried to forget the winter for the time being.

First Clashes in Solovetz

But this peaceful "idyllic" life did not last long. As in the first period at Pertominsk, there began a "blockade" of our incoming and outgoing mail. No move was made in the direction of solving a number of housekeeping problems which arose because of our new quarters. Every visit of Nogtev to the cloister ended with some spiteful ruling. It seemed as if Nogtev was trying to incite our community to such a state of exasperation that some incident would arise of itself which would afford him the opportunity of "taming" the prisoners. In the hospital at the Kremlin, some twelve versts from us, a regime of such petty cruel mockeries was introduced that even those patients who were seriously ill were compelled to return in a day or two.

New batches of prisoners began to arrive. The first small groups were somehow accommodated. But there were still some months of navigation ahead of us and at the rate at which the "G. P. U." was working, we expected such an influx of guests that we could not possibly make room for them. All our anticipations were however surpassed. The number of political prisoners at Solovki was almost doubled during these months. Nogtev was informed that until the assignment of additional buildings we could not find space to accommodate the new arrivals. He then temporarily put in the Kremlin a large batch of Siberian social-revolutionists and a group of social-democrats, about 35 people, placing them under a semi-prison regime. All the efforts to obtain permission for a meeting of the elder of the new group with the committee of elders of the Savvatievo community, in order to work out jointly some scheme of accommodation, were futile. Any intercourse between the arrivals and the Savvatievo inmates was resolutely forbidden. A couple of weeks later Nogtev invited the Kremlin inmates to move to the newly organized Muksolm cloister, about 22 versts from Savvatievo. The tactics of Nogtev, calculated to isolate the Kremlin and Savvatievo prisoners from each other, surcharged the atmosphere more and more every day in both camps. The Savvatievo community was raging, the Kremlin group was foaming. More than once it came close to an outbreak of a hunger-strike of 200 persons. The nerves and passions were strained to the bursting-point. Nogtev not only refused the sole demand raised by the Kremlin prisoners, who agreed to go to Muksolm, for permission to hold periodical meetings of the elders to settle common economic matters, to distribute the parcels arriving from the mainland, to exchange books, etc., but refused even permission for one such meeting at which a solution could be outlined for some of the questions which are of enormous importance to the prisoners because of the complete isolation of Solovki from the rest of the world.

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On August 22, Nogtev declared to the committee of elders of the Kremlin prisoners that if they should not move voluntarily to Muksolm, they would be transferred by force, and once there they might at their leisure declare "a little hunger-strike". It was to the same group that Nogtev had offered to supply "a little rope" when they went on a hunger-strike at the Archangelsk Preliminary Prison. The same night the Kremlin prisoners were bound and in that condition transferred to the Muksolm cloister. The procedure did not, of course, come off without slapping, blows, blue marks, etc. And in the morning Nogtev left for Moscow.

About two weeks later a special commission of the "G. P. U.", headed by Feldman, arrived from Moscow. The commission came for the ostensible purpose of removing all the ugly conditions and of directing the life of the political prisoners into more calm channels. A joint meeting of the committees of elders of the two cloisters was arranged and nearly all their requests were acted upon favorably. (Only the first request—about the abolition of the camp at Solovki and the transfer of the prisoners to the mainland—was negatived.) The blockade of mail was raised, although it had already been relaxed. Relatives began to arrive and according to the new "charter", they were permitted to stay with us, whereas before that they were allowed, after a long and arduous trip, but three meetings with us of two hours each, in the presence of the officials. We breathed a little easier. The thought of the inevitable winter was pushed into the background, although it was still causing anxiety as before. Thus things drifted until the middle of October, when a new commission headed by Bokyi arrived. But this was already a commission for altogether different purposes, a commission for "the interpretation of the reforms". Together with Bokyi came Nogtev too.

Bokyi himself "interpreted" nothing, he only modestly declared that Feldman did not take everything "into account" and therefore it was now impossible to carry out all his promises. It appeared that in spite of "the assistance by Comrade Semashko",* not a single physician would agree to come "voluntarily" to Solovki. It appeared that the question of the seriously ill, regarding whose transfer application had been made in March and in July, has not even been discussed yet in the "G. P. U." The advisability of the new system of the visits by relatives was also raised again. But the most important of the "interpretations" was the arrival of Nogtev. The committee of elders, after Bokyi declared that Nogtev was present in his capacity of Chief of the Department of Concentration Camps, pointed out that leaving us in the hands of Nogtev for the winter inspired us with our old feeling of alarm, that we had to insist once more on our transfer to some point on the mainland, and that we placed all responsibility on the leading organs of the Soviet Government for anything that might

*Semashko—Commissar of Health in the Soviet Government.

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happen here. Bokyi calmed the committee of elders, stating that he had brought with him a whole staff of orderly and courteous officials. At this we parted, after solving a number of minor questions. Some "interpretations" were apparently made by the new commission as to the findings of the previous commission. (There were endless rumors in the camp about embezzlements and dark deeds connected with the confiscation of church valuables. Nogtev had executed in August two monks, and this was the cause of the rumors.)

Again we began to hear talk of the stone "bags", and of similar things. But nevertheless the "policy of courtesy" remained externally in force. With tacit consent from above, Eichmans, the recently appointed associate of Nogtev, came to conduct various negotiations, since Nogtev is virtually boycotted by us, and he tried to maintain the policy of peace introduced in September by Feldman.

Just at the time when Bokyi's commission was here, a painful event occurred in the Muksolm cloister; the youth Sandomir, a left socialist-revolutionist, committed suicide; Bokyi prohibited any intercourse of the cloisters for ascertaining the details of the suicide. There followed an order forbidding the community as a whole from participating in the funeral and burying him on the grounds of the camp, near the fence. Only thanks to the efforts of the commandant of the cloister who realized the state of mind of the political prisoners was it possible to avert a disaster in Muksolm. The refusal to give the Savvatievo prisoners an opportunity to learn what was going on in Muksolm again inflamed our community to the highest degree. (The memory of Aranovitch's suicide was still fresh in every mind.) Nogtev left for Kem, in the company of Bokyi. A short telephonogram sent by Eichmans concerning the Muksolm tragedy somewhat relieved the tension and averted a hunger-strike which was scheduled to commence that day.

Now our life is once more following a peaceful course. Winter is here. We expect any day the closing of navigation. During the next six or seven months we will be completely severed from the outside world. These are possibly the last lines you will have from us until next June. We must arm ourselves with courage and self-control. We are all studying hard and have inaugurated a series of lectures and talks on diverse topics, and are preparing another series for a later period. But we do not know whether we shall be permitted to continue our studies in peace. The "war" of Eichmans, who had gone to Moscow with an ultimatum, "either I or Nogtev", ended with Nogtev's remaining. (In Pertominsk, Nogtev boasted, incidentally, that he had himself signed a death sentence for his own brother! He is generally an absolutely abnormal person, a maniac, which does not prevent him from being the "tzar and god" over 5,000 prisoners.)

At the same time it became known that the "G. P. U." in Moscow is again dissatisfied with the "liberal policy" introduced at Solovki.

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Only part of the sick ones, Egorov, Helfgott, Arkavina and Trofimova, were taken away from here, the applications of the rest were refused. although the woman-doctor who was recently sent here by Communist Feldman, drew up a list of comrades, altogether about ten names, that should be removed from Solovki.

Altogether we have a sufficient percentage of sick persons. Our own physicians recently examined the entire Savvatievo community. Fifty-two per cent of the prisoners are ill. Especially numerous are the lung ailments, 14 percent, including 11 percent of tubercular cases. The rest are suffering with diseases of the intestinal organs, nerves, malaria, etc. The winter here will be injurious to many.

Enough for the present. We bid you farewell. We want to be cheerful. To you, whose "freedom" differs so little from prison life, we send our best wishes and our comradely gratitude for all your cares about us.

Solovki, December, 1923.
(Signature)

HUNGER STRIKES*

(1922)

On January 28, 1822, a group of anarchists in the Kisselnaya Prison, in Moscow, declared a hunger strike. They demanded either to be given an open trial or to be permitted to leave the country. On the third day of the strike, on January 30, these anarchists were transferred to another prison, on which occasion they were subjected to physical violence. Three of their number (G. K. Askareff, the Secretary of the Russian Section of the Anarcho-Universalists and editor of their journal, the "Universay"; S. A. Stitzenko and M. V. Simtchin) sentenced to two years concentration camp in Severo-Dvinsk, were taken to Archangelsk, together with 17 other anarchists who did not participate in the hunger strike and who had been sentenced to the concentration camp and exile in Archangelsk. Askareff, Stitzenko and Simtchin declared that they would continue their hunger strike, which they did. The guards accompanying them telegraphed several times en route to the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (the *Tcheka*), informing the latter of the situation. Arriving in Archangelsk the prisoners were sent to the headquarters of the local Tcheka where examination of the accompanying official papers disclosed the fact that there had been filed two sentences against each of the three hunger strikers (Askareff, Stitzenko and Simtchin). The All-Russian *Tcheka* had sentenced them to the concentration camp in Severo-Dvinsk, while the Moscow had at the same time ordered them to be sent to the Archangelsk camp. It was already the ninth day of the hunger strike and

*This letter reveals some of the earlier history of the "Northern Camps."

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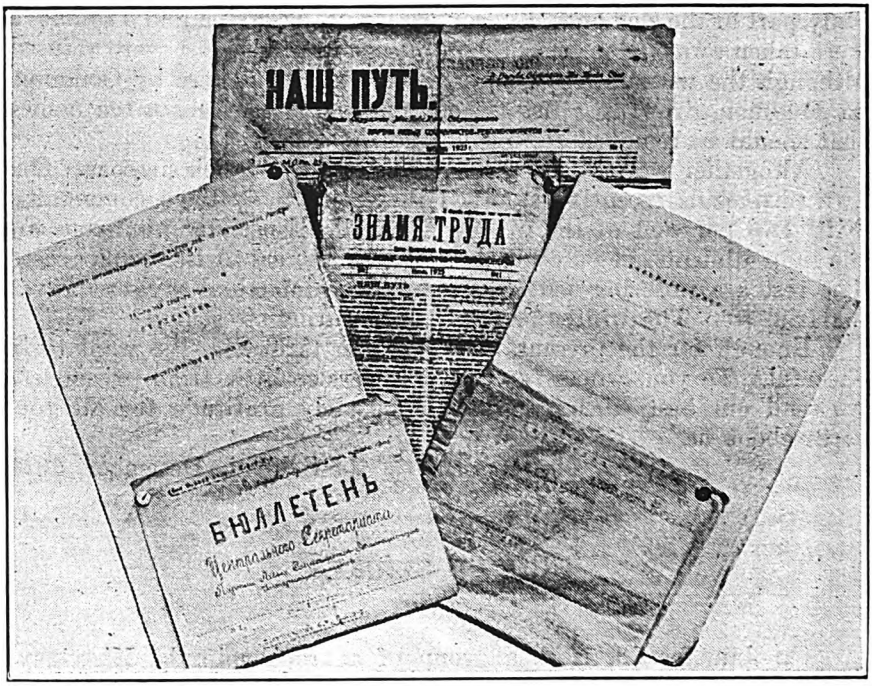

ILLEGAL MAGAZINES AND BULLETINS ISSUED IN RUSSIA BY THE LEFT SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONIST PARTY

the men could hardly stand on their feet. They were thrown into a sleigh, with the thermometer showing 25° below zero, and sent to the "distribution point" (which is also the concentration camp) and there left for hours in the cold. For some reason the Distribution Point refused to receive them, and they were ordered back to the *Tcheka*, where they were again left out in the cold (no less than half an hour). Then they were sent to the hospital. Within a few hours, upon the refusal of the men to accept medical aid, they were again put in the sleigh and returned to the *Tcheka*. The next day they were taken in the same sleigh to the concentration camp and there placed in the general barracks. Within two days they were again transferred to the concentration camp hospital.

On the sixteenth day of the hunger strike Simtchin was attacked by convulsions. The Commandant came then and stated that he had received a telegram from the Superintendent of the Tcheka concentration camps, a certain Katznelson, of Moscow. In his telegram Katznelson asked the men to terminate their hunger strike till his arrival, in view of the fact that he had been given authority to settle the whole matter to everybody's satisfaction. The men consented conditionally, but demanded that the Camp Administration put Katz-

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nelson's offer in writing. It took from the evening till 1 P. M. of the next day before the paper was prepared; on February 13, on the seventeenth day of the hunger strike, the latter was terminated. The medical staff of the hospital exerted themselves in a touching manner in behalf of the men, giving them the best of care, and soon they began to improve.

When Superintendent Katznelson arrived he did not show himself to the prisoners, and when called upon by them he pretended to know nothing of the matter. Upon being faced with the official "paper" he declared that he would make telegraphic inquiry of the *Tcheka*. Convinced of the uselessness of all these excuses, Askareff and the others began their second hunger strike on March 3, which proved of terrible effect upon their constitutions not yet recovered from the first hunger strike. Already on the first day all of them had a high temperature. On the third day Stitzenko showed a temperature of 40°, and he became deaf. On the fourth day Askareff also had a temperature of 40°; he suffered convulsions, turned blue and cold, and for a time seemed almost dead. The prison administration, becoming alarmed, ordered the medical staff to list Askareff among the contagious cases, so that in case of his death it could be officially reported that he died not from hunger but from some contagious disease, in all probability typhus.

About this time there was received a telegram from the All-Russian *Tcheka* to the effect that the sentences of Askareff and the others had been set aside, that they were to be put on trial and should therefore be sent to Moscow. The hunger strike was then of course terminated. After having somewhat recuperated in the hospital, the prisoners were transferred to Moscow, where they were placed in the "inner" prison" (of the *Tcheka*). Upon their threat to begin a new hunger strike they were transferred on April 1 to the Kisselnaya Prison, from which they had been removed two months previously.

The story of the other 17 transferred anarchists is as follows: In Archangel they were sent at night from the railroad station to the *Tcheka*, arriving there tired, half frozen and hungry. The Commandant of the *Tcheka* wanted to send seven of their number away immediately, to some unknown place. The prisoners declared that they would refuse to be moved till morning. The Commandant drew his revolver and threatened their lives, but that proved of no avail. The prisoners refused to give their names, and the Commandant could therefore not select the seven men he needed. In the morning all the seventeen were taken to the concentration camp, where they were divided into three groups and placed in separate barracks.

The Archangel Camp

The Archangelsk concentration camp consists of 20 barracks, six of which are occupied by prisoners. The barracks are long buildings,

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each about 140 feet long, containing two rows of double benches placed one above of the other. In these barracks there are crowded up to 500 persons, but just now the barracks contain (owing to reduced "loading") 100 to 150 men each. They all lie on the bare boards; there are no mattresses, pillows, or blankets. The place is alive with vermin. The first thing that struck the new arrivals was the sight of scores of naked prisoners carefully picking lice off their underwear. Dirt, cockroaches and lice constantly fall from the upper benches on the lower right on the sleepers below. On the whole, the upper places are to be preferred, also because it is warmer there, although the barracks are generally tolerably well heated and the inmates do not complain of cold.

Every new arrival is subjected to a thorough search, being completely undressed, examined all over, and so on. All the belongings of the prisoners, such as underwear, clothing, money, little mirrors, etc., are taken from them, to be turned over to the stock room. They are permitted to keep only one change of underwear. Those who have, for instance, both shoes and felt boots, or an overcoat and a fur half-coat, may retain only one of the things. Even the apparel with which the All-Russian *Tcheka* had supplied the anarchists were here taken away from them in spite of all their protests. The things are supposed to go to the stock room. But between 2 and 3 o'clock on the same night the anarchists heard a group of overseers go to the stock room and there begin to sort the things. The anarchists raised a cry, and the keepers retreated in confusion, explaining that they intended only to examine the things again.

The population of the camp is made up of Kronstadt and Tambov prisoners, of Wrangel and Savinkov men, and a considerable number of *Tchekists*, come to grief. The remarkable peculiarity of the camp consists in the fact that the prisoners serve as their own guards, manage all the affairs of the institution and keep up a most cruel regime. There is no paid staff in the camp. All the positions, comprising those of keepers, overseers, clerks, employees of the general administration, of the hospital, the educational department, and including even the "Acting Commandant," are filled by prisoners, mostly from the number of the *Tchekists*. The members of the administration have feathered their bed so well there that some of them prefer to retain their positions after completing their sentences or receiving a pardon. That was the case with Oyia (educated as a jurist, formerly Chief of the Tambov *Tcheka*, sentenced to be shot for colossal thefts of diamonds and other robberies, his sentence later changed to 25 years' service in the camp), the Acting Commandant, the engineer Nosatchenko, and others.

That this regime can be maintained is due to the presence of the many *Tcheka* men and to the moral degradation and corruption which the great majority of the prisoners have fallen into—more cor-

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rectly, have been forced into. Comparatively most decent have remained the Kronstadt men, but of their original number of 5,000 sent to the Archangelsk camp, there have remained, it is said, after one year, only 1,500 persons. And yet they were a young and exceptionally strong and healthy race. The inmates of the camp have lost almost all semblance of humanity. They are absorbed by the one thought of self-preservation by means of gaining the good will of the authorities and thus securing the position of an overseer or some good work. The surest and quickest way of "standing in" with the administration is to turn spy. As a result, all of them—prisoners, overseers and the higher officials—are busy spying on each other. On the average there are (the Bolsheviki keep statistics on every subject) twenty reports of spies every day. Nothing, not a single word spoken, is hidden from the authorities. There is no attempt in the camp at organization, mutual help, solidarity or united struggle. The female prisoners—formerly of the aristocracy and the *intelligentsia*—give themselves to any overseer at his first demand, without protest or resistance.

According to the inmates, the regime of the camp has become comparatively more tolerable, the punishments fewer and the treatment more decent after the prison had been investigated by a Commission appointed at the instigation of the "Red Cross"*. Yet the following fact throws light on the character of the existing discipline. When the anarchists arrived, the peasant Glebov, of Vologda, who knew them and who had been imprisoned together with them before, tried to attract their attention by knocking on his window and shouting. For this he was put into the punishment cell for two weeks and afterwards sent to Kholmogory to hard labor.

In the morning all the prisoners must line up for the count and at the given signal sing the "International." Before the investigation the singing of the "International" was obligatory, but now the prisoners are not forced to sing. Yet failure to sing is considered evidence of unrepentance and counter-revolutionary obstinacy. After the song the prisoners are formed into groups of ten for work within the camp. These are selected from the healthy and clad inmates. Many go about in such rags that even the authorities do not consider it possible to send them out into the cold. Refusal to work is punished with the dark cell.

The prisoners receive tea three times a day, with three ounces of sugar. Dinner consists of soup made of some fish, while for supper is given kasha (gruel) of wheat or rice, prepared with fat (imported). The products are of good quality; the food is not only eatable but palatable, but there is not enough of it. Previous to the

*Political Red Cross conducted by Madame Peshkova, former wife of Gorky. Functions for political prisoners.

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investigation, the daily bread ration consisted of one pound per person; now it has been increased to a pound and a half.

Anarchist Hunger Strike

Soon after their arrival the anarchists declared a hunger strike, putting forth the following demands: to be placed together in a separate wing, to have their elected starosta (official spokesman of the group) recognized by the authorities (in the camp the starosta is appointed by the administration), to receive books, papers and personal apparel; permission to associate with the women anarchists, and some other lesser demands. The hunger strike lasted eight days. The authorities did nothing except to place armed guards beside the hunger strikers. After a while word came from the All-Russian *Tcheka* that the demands of the strikers concerned the internal management and therefore the matter was to be taken up by the local administration. Assistant Superintendent Lebedinsky agreed to satisfy almost all the demands of the strikers excepting their right of association with the women. That question Lebedinsky left to the decision of Katznelson, who was soon to arrive, and who was expected to legalize the newly gained rights. When Katznelson arrived he refused to enlarge the privileges of the anarchists and declared that he would not issue the legalizing order, on the ground that the anarchists were to be sent to Kholmogory, their presence in the Archangelsk camp being only temporary. Similarly Katznelson refused to release from the camp the anarchists (Afanassiev, Kisselev, Altshuler and others), who had been sentenced not to the camp but to exile. (Incidentally, there are generally cases where those sent to Archangelsk for exile, with definitive instructions to that effect, are imprisoned in the camp.)

Thus the eight-day hunger strike proved of no avail, and the anarchists faced the question what to do under the circumstances. Then the women anarchists forced their way into the main cell of their male comrades in order to consider joint action in the matter. The authorities sent for the guards, who used violence to pull the women out of the cell. Spontaneously there began a new hunger strike, the men immediately throwing their bread and other food out of the cell as a protest against the brutality toward the women. Within a few days the women were at night transferred to another prison—the House of Correction. The circumstances of the transfer were such that the women felt convinced they were being taken to execution. They threw off their upper clothing in order that the executioner might not possess themselves of it. Five of the hunger striking men were taken from their cell at night, subjected to violence and sent on a cart to Kholmogory. These five were: Karasik, Lukin, Tarasiuk, Silayev, and Mokhov. They continued their hunger strike during the transfer and upon their arrival at the new place. The

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women grew so weak from the second hunger strike that on the fifth day they were transferred to the camp. Soon Katznelson appeared there and declared that all the anarchists, both the men and the women, would be sent to Kholmogory and that there they would be placed in a separate wing with full autonomy and all their demands satisfied. The women consented. Then Katznelson suggested that they send one of their number as delegate to terminate the hunger strike at Kholmogory, because—as he correctly assumed—the prisoners there would give no credence to the communication of the authorities. The hunger strike was stopped on the sixth or seventh day, but the woman delegate was not called for and the administration acted very ambiguously. Then the women began the third hunger strike. They were transferred (with the exception of L. Altshuler, who fell sick as a result of long hunger), together with the remaining men to Kholmogory. No news has since been received from there.

A JOURNEY TO THE NORTH*

(November 1923)

The Society to Aid Imprisoned Anarchists in Russia sent me, in August, 1922, to the north of Russia with a view of bringing succor to our comrades who are in exile or in concentration camps.

Having received a month's leave from the institution where I was employed, I left quite legally and with credentials from the above society, first for Vologda, then further north to Archangelsk, and lastly to the famous Kholmogory concentration camp. . . .

Vologda

The day after I reached Vologda† I managed to pay a visit to the Provincial House of Correction (formerly City Prison), where a few anarchist peasants were then imprisoned, being accused of "rebellion" for having refused to pay unduly heavy taxes.

One of the imprisoned peasants, over 60 years of age, asked me, with tears in his eyes, to thank all the comrades for not having forgotten them; he told me of the horrible prison conditions and of the inhuman treatment they had to endure at the hands of the prison authorities. The prison was damp, cold, dark; food was so repulsive that it was impossible to take it. Each time they were called out for examination they were threatened to be shot unless they confessed the would-be organization of the "rebellion" and gave the names of their village mates who were supposed to have taken part in the organization that never existed.

I visited also the Vologda concentration camp (formerly the Provincial Hard Labor Prison). Comrade Lukin was kept here;

†See G. M. Yudenitch description, page 28 of Vologda prison.
*See Fleshin's questionnaire, page 104.

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he is an old anarchist, worked in the Cooperative movement since 1906; was in exile under the Tzarist regime; was released by the 1917 revolution, in which he had taken a very active part; was greatly respected among the Vologda workmen. Lukin, who was consumptive, was kept under horrible conditions that do not lend themselves to description: filth, parasites, choking atmosphere; food which called out a desire to vomit; common bed planks and compulsory dirty work. These are the conditions under which live those who are confined in the Vologda concentration camp.

Archangelsk

A day and a half later I was in Archangelsk. I decided to go immediately to the local "G. P. U." (formerly *Tcheka*) and ask for a permit to visit the comrades confined in the Kholmogory concentration camp. I did this on purpose so as not to give any pretext to the local authorities for wanting to arrest me on suspicion of having come for some secret purpose, thus stopping me from carrying out my mission.

When I came to the "G. P. U." I was told, after lengthy and detailed examinations and control of my credentials and other documents, that no visit could be allowed until a permit would reach me from Moscow. I could, therefore, do nothing but send them some food and books.

Half an hour later I was already in company of Luba and Khaya Altshool, exiled to Archangelsk for two years. In the evening I saw the rest of our exiles: Peter Skurikhin, Maria Veger, Alexander Afanassieff.

I learned from them the unbearable conditions in which our Kholmogory friends find themselves and the hard life our exiles are having. I convinced myself personally of the latter after a few days' life here.

Twice a week the exiles have to present themselves for registration to the "G. P. U." It was almost impossible to find work for them, as exiles are not taken on. The State has to pay them a monthly grant (as in olden times), but generally it pays them once in six months a paltry sum which has no market value. But the greatest nightmare of the present day exile is the system of espionage. Every moment of an exile is being watched. All the exiles are ceaselessly under a nervous strain, and they often fight in the open these spies. More than once did Skurikhin have to open suddenly the window of the room where we were sitting and "have it out" with the spies, who would listen under the window. Once, as we walked in the street and were followed, as usual, by a shadow, Skurikhin lost his temper and, suddenly turning round, abused the spy who was following us. The poor fellow cried that it was not his fault; he was just ordered to dog us. . . .

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The exiles were telling me that, at times, the nervous tension becomes so highly strung that they are ready to commit suicide and get rid of this torture.

All the exiles live under bad conditions; they starve and are barely clothed. Most of them suffer because of the dampness and are down with malaria, which never leaves this locality. They all refused our help and considered that first aid should be given to the Kholmogory comrades, who are in much worse conditions.

Kholmogory

At this period Helen Chekmassova had been transferred from the Kholmogory concentration camp to the Arkangelsk concentration camp. She was pregnant when arrested and was now on the eve of giving birth to a child.

I paid her a visit. The conditions under which she was kept in Archangelsk were much worse than those I found in the Vologda concentration camp. There was no medical attendance. She was a sick, broken woman. Badly clothed, no warm dress, no underclothing, she was thinking with horror of the child that had to come and for which she did not even have the barest necessities.

She told me of the unheard-of conditions under which our comrades had to live in Kholmogory. Three months before my visit, while they were kept in the Moscow prisons and in the cellars of the "G. P. U.", ex-*Tchekist*, and then in the Archangelsk concentration camp, they passed through three hunger strikes, each of 1 to 5 days' duration, demanding improvement of conditions. As a result they were all taken to Kholmogory, and from that spot they had no possibility to let their friends know what was happening to them.

Most of them are consumptive and suffer from scurvy; all are ill with malaria, which never leaves the camp.

The prisoners have, inside the camp, a small house placed at their disposal; it is surrounded by barbed wire entanglements and is guarded by former tchekists who are now "doing time" in this same camp. It is a prison within a prison. Sleeping planks without mattresses or pillows or covers or bedclothes. No clothes are given. Most of them are without boots and without clothes. Those who happened to possess a bedcover were compelled to make trousers and skirts out of them. They cannot go out for a walk, for the sole reason that they have neither boots nor clothes. They just use the boots and trousers in turns. Thus, once a week only, has every inmate the chance of breathing fresh air. Food is very bad.

Having bought all we could for the Kholmogorians, I left the same evening for Kholmogory, accompanied by the wife of one of our exiled comrades. With great difficulties we reached the place. Once there, we had to fight for a good hour before our parcel was

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accepted for transmission. But we were refused permission to visit our friends.

This journey from Archangelsk to Kholmogory, first by boat, then by cart through quagmires; this monastery, transformed into a concentration camp, the savage faces of the white officers and of the tchekists who guard the prisoners—all this produced the impression of a grave into which men are thrown to die a slow death.

Physically worn out and spiritually broken-hearted, we returned to Archangelsk, where we met Nastya Galayeva, who had returned from Veliki-Ustyug. She was sent there, as member of the Society, to distribute help to our exiled comrades. She was once or twice arrested on the road by the authorities, but was allowed to go on, for the only reason that she was in the last stages of consumption. She drew us a picture of the life, full of struggle and suffering, which the exiles are leading in the places she has been visiting.

Two days later Galayeva and myself set out on our way back to Moscow with a feeling that we would be arrested on the way. But we reached safely our destination. All those who went after us to the north as representatives of the Society to Aid Imprisoned Anarchists in Russia were arrested and are now in exile: this was the fate of Lea Gotman, Helen Ganshina and others.

The Kholmogory concentration camp has, since been dismantled as political prison, but worse ones have taken its place; Solovsetzk Monastary, the Pertominsk camp and others.

At present the places of exile, prisons and camps are filled with our comrades. The number of exiled and imprisoned is still mounting up. On the eve of our arrest and deportation abroad we received letters from all corners of Russia, but especially from the North. The conditions under which the anarchists live in the different penitentiaries are like a nightmare. Despair enters their souls and there were already attempts at suicide.

It is difficult to help—morally and materially—the imprisoned comrades in the bolshevist torture chambers; but the worst of all is that there is nothing to help them with—even to give them the barest necessities of life. The Russian workers are now in the midst of a heavy struggle for existence; they are unable to help our imprisoned comrades. The only hope—if one wants to save hundreds of our best fighters for the emancipation of the working class of Russia—rests with the workers and revolutionists of Europe and America. A large and regular financial and moral aid is urgent.

November, 1923. SIMON FLESHIN.

PERTOMINSK HUNGER-STRIKES AGAIN

Dear Comrades: March 25, 1923.

" " Our comrades from Pertominsk have declared, on March 15, a hunger-strike demanding their transfer to Archangelsk. The rea-

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sons for the hunger strike are the following: 1.With the approach of spring there is a recrudescence of malaria, as the locality is marshy and damp. 2. There are, among the prisoners, many who are seriously ill and require special attention, if they are to remain alive, aid which it is impossible to give them there; there are also some exceptional diseases: heart attacks and other cases where immediate help is necessary—this being impossible, as the town is 115 versts away from the camp: the sick person is thus condemned to suffer pain or to die. 3. The isolated and distant situation of Pertominsk deprives the inmates from receiving regular news from their relatives, from receiving newspapers from the outside as well as letters and other quite legal news from the living world; the absence of all this morally kills the prisoners. Many other serious reasons have compelled our comrades to take this step, so risky for their health. It is the 11th day today that hunger strike lasts. We did all we could from here. The Provincial Committee of the Communist Party said that its entire Presidium had decided to demand that Moscow should transfer the hunger strikers to Archangelsk as sick people. It is unpleasant to think of it, but in an atmosphere of tyrants one feels that the decisions they take are despicable and that, therefore, the end of the hunger strike will be disappointing. There were, among the hunger strikers, many who, before the strike, had already suffered from serious diseases. Thus, Lena Chekmassova suffers from internal troubles after the Kholmogory massacre (Nov. 22, 1922); yet she is participating in the hunger strike because to remain in Pertominsk is to condemn oneself to a sure death. . . . .

Moscow has been notified repeatedly. There is no reply, so far. The "G. P. U." seems to have decided to kill the comrades by degrees, and even admits the possibility of a fatal issue.

A few days ago the "Makhnovist" Katya Krutchkova, with her four-months old baby, was transferred from Pertominsk to Archangelsk. We have not seen her yet. Those in Kholmogory know of the hunger strike but have not yet taken any decision.

P. SKURIKHIN.

Dear A., S., and others.

. . . The exceedingly severe hunger-strike of our Pertominsk comrades has completely unnerved me. Although utterly unable to do anything for them, I am yet unable to leave them to their fate. Others consider the hunger-strike a hopeless failure; but I still think that our friends will win and will be transferred to Archangelsk. Our friends knew from the first that the hunger-strike will be a protracted affair, and yet A. and V. have written saying that "they have decided to obtain at all costs their transfer." They feel, in this far-away desert, that they are doomed to death, both physically and morally. Complete isolation; impossibility of obtaining news

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from private sources (the journey costs 700 rubles); letters, newspapers or parcels reach very rarely; added to this the unhealthy climatic conditions which help dissemination of malaria: these are the reasons which compelled our friends to declare their hunger-strike in spite of the weak state of their health. It is difficult, of course, to foresee at present the issue of the hunger-strike. I think that they will be transferred, that they will win. But I am afraid it may be too late, as the state of their health will not be taken into account. All this is so torturing that it is hard to collect one's thoughts and write to you long, explicit letters. It is painful to be but a witness of the sufferings of one's friends, the more so as death is not far behind these sufferings. . . . Your LEA.*

Dear Comrades, March 27, 1923.

There is a desire to tell you of what is going on here, but my hand trembles, my thoughts get entangled and it will hardly be possible to write a detailed letter and say all that there is to say. As you know already, our Pertominsk friends have declared a hunger-strike with the sole demand of being transferred to Archangelsk. They began their strike on March 15. It is very hard to be in full sympathy with the demand of the hunger-strikers and not be able to participate in it. While I was in Pertominsk I convinced myself, from personal impressions and from what I was told by comrades, that nothing but a drawn-out and painful death will be the fate of our friends if they remain in Pertominsk. That being so, it is quite clear why they decided upon such a risky hunger-strike. The risk lies in the fact that they are all broken in their health and that the hunger-strike will be a drawn-out affair. Already on the eighth day our friends felt very weak, especially Chekmassova, Gliebov and Tcharyn, who are in a precarious state. It has become clear to them that the hunger-strike will not end without some victims; I do not yet know the reasons for the despair of some of our friends, but on March 22, eight of the hunger-strikers (men) locked themselves in their cell and attempted to set fire to themselves. Happily (or unhappily) other political prisoners who were not taking part in the hunger-strike smelled the smoke, broke into the cell and saved our friends I have no details as yet. All I know is that after this all the hunger-strikers—8 men and 3 women—were transported to the prison infirmary, where a strong guard is keeping an eye on them. I don't know what harm they had done to themselves.

Today is the 13th day of the hunger-strike. I know that Chekmassova, Gliebov and Tcharyn are on their deathbeds, while I am, to my great horror, powerless to help in any way. We have raised here

*The writer of these letters, Leah Gotman, was later arrested and sent to the Solovetz Camp for having made this report on conditions in the Petrominsk Camp.

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a great to-do about it, but so far resultless. The Provincial Committee of the Communist Party has passed a motion asking the Central authorities to transfer the hunger-strikers to Archangelsk; but it looks as if the Central Power would ignore this demand and refuse to give way. Since the hunger-strikers' transfer to the prison infirmary we have had no news as to the state they are in. I have reasons to think that artificial feeding is being resorted to. In a word—it is terrible. . . . And soon the melting snows will stop any possibility of reaching them. It might so happen that we shall not know for a long time how the tragedy has ended, who died, who has remained alive. . . .

It would be well if you could let the world know about it all—and the sooner the better.

Warm, friendly greetings. LEA.

LIFE IN SOLOVETZ

(August 1924)

Our colony of political prisoners contains at present about 300 persons. There are 137 social-democrats, 14 left socialist-revolutionists, 109 Socialist-Revolutionists, and 35 Anarchists. They occupy the three cloisters of the old Solovetz Monastery. Our cloister, Savvatievo, is the largest one and now holds 180 socialists and anarchists.

Savvatievo is built on the main island, on which are located the headquarters of the department of the northern concentration camps. Here is also imprisoned the main contingent of the common criminals.

The second cloister—Muksolm—is connected with our island by a dam. The third, Golgotha, is on the Anserski Island, separated by four versts of water from the main island.

During the long winter, when the sea is heaped with ice floes, connection between the islands can be kept up only by occasional boats, such an undertaking involving great risk. We had all the time refused to occupy the Anserski Island, for we feared to be cut off not only from the main land but also from the main island, on which we depend for our food supply and medical aid. We also did not want to be placed at the mercy of the local administration and under a regime of common criminals.

But because of the increasing number of new arrivals we have at last been compelled to move to the Anserski Island on condition that we be guaranteed food and medical aid. Now all the cloisters are filled and we are too crowded to accommodate new groups of prisoners. The administration, having no more room to spare, has demanded that no more prisoners be exiled to Solovki. Still, numbers of politicals continue coming.

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Imposition of Criminal Regime on Politicals

The administration, surely not without the knowledge of Moscow, is now exerting its efforts to force us into a regime of common criminals. Thus the last party of socialists that arrived here has for a long time not been recognized as political. In Kem they were placed in dungeons, compelled to do hard labor, and in every way treated like ordinary criminals. Here in the Solovki we have with difficulty succeeded in securing for them recognition as politicals. The two last parties to arrive are still fighting for such recognition, meanwhile living under impossible conditions. They contain 18 persons, among them 6 left socialist-revolutionists, 7 social-democrats, 3 right socialist-revolutionists and 2 anarchists. They are all well known to us, as well as to the "G. P. U.", as some of them have previously been more than once in bolshevik prisons. Among them are the well-known left socialist-revolutionist Riabinin, from the Far Eastern Republic; three comrades from Voronezh, Liapin, Razdebeev, and Kaliuzhniy, and the students Voit and Beloglasov. In spite of our protests and telegrams to the Central Executive Committee in Moscow they are being kept isolated in the Kremlin under a regime threatening any moment to become criminal. Their condition may cause them to declare a hunger-strike, in which we also would become involved.

Besides socialist members of various parties, the "G. P. U." now sends to the Solovki large numbers of non-politicals of socialist tendencies having some relation to the revolutionary movement. The greatest proportion of them are students. You are aware that of late the student movement has grown considerably. After the comb-out in the universities of Peterograd, Moscow and other cities, many of the discharged students were arrested, exiled to remote provincial places or sent to Solovetz, where there have also been brought some "komsomoltsi" (members of the "Young Men's Communist Association").

The Solovetz authorities have refused to consider the students as politicals. Boys and girls of 18, 20 and 22 years of age—hardly any of them have reached 25—are kept together with thieves, murderers and prostitutes, forced to do hard labor and subject to the vilest insults of the officials and common-criminal keepers. Especially hard is the lot of the young student girls: they live in the general dormitories with the old female criminals and are constantly exposed to the brutal attentions of their keepers. A case of this kind took place in the prison of Kem, where the student girl Efimova had the misfortune of pleasing the eye of the eternally intoxicated prison commandant. He decided to keep her in Kem "for work." It required our interference and protests to the administration to cause the transfer of Efimova from Kem to Solovki, where the rest of her comrades are confined.

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Among the other politicals here who are kept on a common criminal regime are many rebel peasants from various parts of the country, as well as numbers of workers arrested for strikes. We want to call our attention especially to the group of Kronstadt sailors imprisoned here by the administration order of "G. P. U." in connection with the Krontadt uprising of 1921. For some time they lived in the Muksolm cloister as politicals. When that cloister became too crowded they were transferred to the Kremlin prison, where they had a formal conference with our elders. We aided them with food, books, newspapers, etc. One day the administration called out the committee of elders of the Krontadt sailors and informed it that in accordance with orders from Moscow the Kronstadt men were to be placed on a regime of common criminals, deprived of their rations as politicals, and put to such work as the authorities will assign them. The Kronstadt spokesmen refused to accept the order, whereupon they were bound. Then the armed guards broke into the building where the Krontadt men were confined. The prisoners refused to obey the new orders from Moscow and were all bound hand and foot and dragged into the dungeons, where they declared a hunger-strike which lasted nine days. The strike ended in failure. Then they decided temporarily to submit, in expectation of a commission which was soon to arrive from Moscow and before which they were to lay the matter for decision.

The administration realized that the matter is not settled, and strove continually to aggravate the Krontadt men and to provoke them into untimely action. With this purpose in view, the authorities on the 20th of July suddenly transferred three Kronstadt prisoners to the Sekirn Hill, placing them, for no reason, (but under the pretext of demoralizing the criminal regime and insulting the keepers) in the punitive jail. They declared a hunger-strike. Their transfer was accompanied by violence and beating. The remaining seven men joined the strike. They were removed to the cellar. It was a hard strike and lasted fourteen days. We expected a tragedy at any moment. One of the men, Yudin, twice attempted suicide; two others began to cough blood on the eleventh day. The administration remained indifferent and only on the fourteenth day the elder of the Kronstadt group was called out for negotiations, as a result of which the three men were released from the dungeon on the Sekirn Hill. The common criminal regime, however, remained in force. The community of the Kronstadt men was recognized and they were promised that they would not be separated and would be assigned to tasks according to their skill.

All the hunger strikers—Yermolaev, Eveltis, Andreitcshenko, Defotov, Kulishev, Kurkesh, Belov, Yudin, Saharov, Raskasov—were taken to the hospital in an awful condition. Some of them may yet pay with their lives for that hunger strike. This whole group con-

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sists exclusively of honest, good fellows, Kronstadt sailors and workers, loyal to the Revolution. According to their party sympathies they are divided into: 2 left socialist-revolutionists, 4 anarchists, 1 social-democrat. The rest are non-partisan but recognize the November (Soviet) Revolution. They form the remaining small band of Kronstadt revolutionists who have not yet perished and who preserved their political consciousness in spite of the systematic executions by the Soviet government. Our community of the Savvatievo cloister protested and in a telegram to the Central Executive Committtee of the union we demanded the urgent ending of the hunger strike declared by the Kronstadt men. We demanded that an end be put to the cruelties perpetrated on them and that they should be recognized as political prisoners. But without avail. There is no doubt that their struggle is not yet over; that the administration will not leave them alone and will again try to provoke them into some action to exterminate them. In 1922, when we were in exile in Archangelsk, we were told that the Kronstadt men were being tortured and shot by the thousands in the northern camps, in Pertominsk, Kholmogory, etc. Only those who succeeded in escaping are still among the living.

Complaints of Recognized Politicals

Now, about us, the recognized socialists. I have already mentioned the fact that the administration of the camps and Moscow are pursuing a policy of abolition of the political regime. This expresses itself not only in offers to refuse recognition to new parties of political prisoners, but also in many other matters directly affecting us. Thus, the question of "self-service" is now in an extraordinarily acute phase. The plan is to force us to do compulsory labor and, for a beginning, efforts are made to have us cut timber for our needs, to heat the bathhouse, to cart out the refuse, etc. . . . Up to the present time we never yet did compulsory work, even for our own needs, in any of the prisons. In Pertominsk and in the course of a year, in Solovski, we voluntarily attended to certain things; for instance, we cleaned the building, heated it, cocked our food, cleaned the yard, washed the laundry. The harder labor, such as the cutting of timber in the forest and the carting of the refuse, was provided by the administration. Suddenly, in the spring, we were requested to take over these burdensome tasks too. We have no guarantees that this would not be followed by compulsion to provide service for the entire camp, including the administration. This we cannot accept, just as we cannot accept any kind of forced labor, even for our own needs. We have been exiled administratively*, and the administration must provide us with all the necessities. Voluntarily, it is true,

*For decree on administrative exile see page 296.

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we would attend to certain jobs, but we cannot agree to take them over as forced duties, since we perceive in this an attempt to introduce gradually penal servitude for socialists. Besides, there are many other reasons why compulsory labor is impossible for us. Half of our prisoners are sick. We have many women. . . . We therefore refused to accept "self-service."

We were deprived of the bathhouse early in the spring; our supply of fuel was discontinued when there was still snow on the ground, and we were kept in cold and damp cells. We had to reduce our ration of hot water and warm food because there was not wood and the administration supplied none. And now we are still without food, and it looks as if we are to have very soon only dry rations —bread and water. All this in spite of the fact that many of us are sick with scurvy and many are suffering from other diseases. We have been waiting a long time for a commission from Moscow, but so far it has not arrived. We mean to put before it, when it arrives, all the questions of our prison life here which has become extraordinarily complicated recently. During the winter it has become clear that Solovki is not supplied with sufficient food, and under the system existing here it is hardly possible to be assured of supplies. We had explained the matter to Feldman and Bokyi, of the commission that came here from Moscow in the fall of 1923. They assured us that there were sufficient provisions. In spite of that the rations fixed by them were shortened already in December, and in February the number of hospital rations was automatically reduced by the Department to 15 per cent., i. e., 27 rations for 180 people. We have many more sick persons now. In accordance with the prescriptions of the prison physician, we were receiving about 50 rations before the reduction. In reality, however, we did not get even the 15 per cent., since it appeared that many articles of first necessity, such as butter, white flour, etc., were entirely lacking in Solovki. The result is scurvy, wholesale cases of it. . . .

The medical aid we receive here is below criticism. The prison physicians show little interest in the sick. There are no socialist doctors. As a general rule few get treatment in the hospital, as there are no medical supplies. Towards spring we did not even have any iodine. The attitude towards the patients is disgusting. There have been frequent occasions when the doctor turned our sick comrades out of the hospital, without even examining them, after they had made the trip of 12 versts from the cloister. Just now a number of our prisoners need special medical attention. For the last three months we have demanded their transfer to the mainland. So far we have succeeded in getting across only four of them: Markman, a left socialist-revolutionist; Martsinkevitch, connected with the case of the left socialist-revolutionists, and two anarchists, Siutevitch and Veger (almost at the point of death). About the others application

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has been made to Moscow, but no reply has been received. The general policy of Moscow is "to put the screws tight" on us. The entire "constitution" designed by the commission of Feldman in 1923 was abolished from the day of the shooting on December 19. One paragraph after another is gradually being nullified. First the promenading hours and the supply of light were limited, then the conferences with the committee of elders of Muksolm were suspended; afterwards the food ration was reduced. New efforts are being made to introduce "self-service" and to force us to a common criminal regime (as in the case of the Kremlin prisoners), and finally at this moment the visits of relatives have been prohibited in our building. Those of them who came were permitted to see their folks at the headquarters, in the presence of keepers. They traveled a thousand versts to the Solovki, spending the last penny in order to see us, but it is impossible to talk in such circumstances. After a lapse of 8 or 9 months, during which we had neither visitors nor even regular correspondence, this is the last drop of cruelty. We are waiting for the commission in order to raise before it the question of our transfer altogether from Solovki. We feel that we could not survive another winter like the past one. . . . (Signature)

August, 1924.*

MORE ABOUT SOLOVETZ

(Summer of 1924)

In 1923 over three thousand prisoners were brought to the Solovetz concentration camp. The socialists and anarchists, numbering about 300, were placed in the Savvatievo and Muksolmn cloisters, 12 versts away from the main monastery. The bulk of the prisoners, the common criminals, the counter-revolutionists and profiteers were left in the Kremlin. Together with the criminals were also imprisoned rebel peasants, workers arrested for strikes, and others. In the Kremlin and the adjacent houses and hostelries, which were preserved after the fire, the administration, the keeper, the red army detachment and the various government departments and bureaus were quartered. In utter darkness, one almost on top of the other, 2,500 prisoners were jammed together. Large bunks were installed in the big church and more than a hundred convicts were wallowing there. Even in the worst czarist prisons there existed definite population limits for every cell; otherwise life in prison could not last long. Here the authorities did not even think of any such standards.

The spirit of old Asiatic Muscovy reigned here from the very beginning, restored, it is true, from the opposite end of the pole,

*The Russian text of this letter bore no date, but from the contents it would appear that it was written three months after the opening of navigation, approximately in August.

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amid altogether different surroundings. But it is the same spirit. The crosses were removed from the church steeples, the walls of the church were denuded, the ikons were painted over; in place of the saints—portraits of Lenin, Trotzky and Marx were drawn, and instead of texts from the Bible, the mottoes of the Russian Communist Party appeared. Instead of vespers the old bells now sound prison signals. The old monastery, which served as an atrocious prison in former days, has now become altogether an inferno. The prisoners live in the most intolerable conditions, amidst terrible crowding, hunger, cold, and are forced to do hard labor. Exposed in the summer to the constant winds and the mosquitoes and in the winter to icy storms and frost, the half-naked, ragged, miserable prisoners, whose bodies are visible through the holes in their tattered clothes, are compelled to cut wood, to pull stumps, to make pitch, do fishing, and to do the chores of the bathhouse, the laundry, the cattle-yard, etc.

The task system established by the authorities imposes on each person an amount of labor which not even a healthy, well-clothed and well-nourished man could manage to do in a day. It is clear that the emaciated, exhausted, half-starved men are unable to complete their tasks. Then their rations are cut down and they are punished in other ways, transferred to the penal squad and there permitted neither work nor open-air exercises, being kept on a half-ration, condemned to slow death from exhaustion.

At the end of 1923 the church on the Sekirn Hill was converted into a special prison for delinquents. Even here, in the Solovki, the Sekirn prison is an object of terror.

Downtrodden, crushed by fear, the prisoners sent to the Sekirn Hill would usually resist the transfer desperately and generally would be taken there bound hand and foot. In the Sekirn jail, we are informed, all the convicts are kept in the church, which is almost never heated. Once a day they receive warm food, twice hot water, and one pound of bread. And nothing else. Life on Sekirn Hill became so insufferable that two or three months after its establishment an epidemic of suicides broke out among the prisoners, and one after another, men were brought to the hospital with their abdomens ripped open with a knife.

The "Stone Bags"

In the Kremlin itself the remnants of the old prison preserved since times immemorial were also being put to full use. In the cellars of the thick, enormous wall surrounding the monastery there still exist the dungeons of the days of Ivan the Terrible. These dungeons, known here as stone "bags", are nothing but deep pits in the wall. The entrance into them is so small that one can effect it only sidewise. The "bag" itself is narrow, short, low. The inmate of such a

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"bag" can move with difficulty, sometimes he cannot even stretch himself fully. Into these dungeons were put prisoners guilty of some violation of prison discipline. The term of confinement there was long, sometimes two to three weeks. Frequently the prisoner was forced to strip almost naked, remaining only in his underwear. The "bags" are infested with swarms of lice, roaches, bugs, etc.

In September, 1923, a commission headed by the *tchekist* Feldman come to inspect the camp. It is being told here that while on his tour of examination Feldman also examined the "bags." Neither he nor any other member of the commission entered any of the "bags" —so strong was the stench emanating from them. By way of a test a rag was thrown into one of them, and when pulled out it was entirely covered with vermin. The torture-chambers set up by Ivan the Terrible justified their tradition. It is true, Feldman, a former revolutionist, was, according to report, upset but very little. However, he ordered the "bags" abolished as punitive instruments, but the resurrectors and imitators of the period of Ivan the Terrible remained in their positions—masters of the lives and deaths of hundreds of prisoners. Instead of being confined a comparatively short term in the stone "bags" the prisoners are doomed to much longer terms in the Sekirn prison. . . .

More than once the political prisoners heard the cries and moans of beaten men compelled to labor not only in the daytime but also at night. Summer and winter all the prisoners are lined up for control in the Kremlin yard. Exhausted by long and hard toil, they have to stand in line, sometimes awaiting for several hours the arrival of the keeper in charge or the commandant to count them. This standing in line, while exposed to wind and rain, was frequently arranged solely for the purpose of mockery and torture. No one would dare raise his voice in protest, as that meant the stone "bag," a beating or exposure nude to the mosquitoes under the large signal bell.

To cap it all, capital punishment is being practiced widely. In 1923 and 1924 the administration has executed without trial a number of convicts for attempts to escape and for intercourse with the political prisoners. Very few successful escapes from the Solovki have taken place. Almost in every case the runaways are caught. In 1924 an order was issued punishing with death any attempt to escape. Every such execution is announced beforehand to all the criminal prisoners at the roll-call. The part of executioner would often be played by the higher officials, out of sheer love for the "art." The chief of the department, Nogtev, with his own hands, shot to death a free resident of Solovki who was hiring out to do different jobs. Subsequently, the assistant commandant of the first section, Sukis, an unusually dull Lett, did all the executions himself and boasted of his "work" before the prisoners and the overseers.

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Treatment of the Women

There are many women prisoners in Solovetz, both political and criminal. They form as variegated a body as that of the male prison, comprising professional thieves, crooks and prostitutes alongside of victims of the revolution imprisoned for political "crimes" or even merely "on suspicion." The group contains persons guilty of "bourgeois origin" and numerous students who took part in political protests. All these women were huddled together in the so-called "female barrack." They are completely in the power of the Solovetz administration. They are forced to become the concubines—first, of the higher officials, then of the chief inspectors, and gradually lower down to the pettiest officer. By degrees they are bereft of all human semblance, are infected with venereal diseases, and the "female barrack" is turned into a veritable inferno. The tears, hysterics of the worn-out victims of the Solovetz system mingle with the coarse language and vulgar oaths of the old-time criminals and prostitutes. . . . Even some of the prison keepers consider guard duty in the barrack as most trying. Among the women there is much insanity and all forms of disease. Those that struggle and seek to defend their chastity are harassed with hard labor; punished with the dungeon, and so forth. Last winter, when a woman confined in the dungeon became hysterical and not being able to bear any longer the torments, began to cry, weep, break window-panes, the soldier on guard simply shot her.

Characteristic is the personnel of the administration of Solovetz as well as of the other northern camps and prisons. With a few exceptions, all the officials are themselves prisoners. The guards, the office force, the majority even of the higher officials are selected from the inmates. The outside posts are held by a special detachment of the red army. Simple peasant youths could not practice that system of continuous human torture such as has been established in Solovetz and the other northern camps. For this purpose are needed special men deprived of all that is human, men without consciousness and without mercy. Such a body is recruited by the administration from among the convicts. The keepers and overseers are preferably selected from the *tchekists* sent to Solovki to serve sentences. These criminals are given special privileges, they serve in the Solovki more as officials than convicts. Frequently their jail terms are reduced and special favors conferred upon them. In return for this it is their duty to watch closely the other prisoners.

Summer, 1924.*

*The Russian text of this letter was received by the left socialists-revolutionists in Berlin in October, 1924.

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THE MASSACRE

(Summer of 1924)

Dear Comrades:*

We, socialists, prisoners of the Bolshevist Government, thrown without trial into the Soviet concentration camp on the Solovetz Islands, out off by the ice floes of the White Sea from the living world, appeal to you, socialists and leaders of the world's labor movement. We address ourselves to you in order to convey through you to the workers and socialists of the whole world the story of the unexampled bloody tragedy which was enacted on December 19, 1923, on the Solovetz Islands, and the truth of which the Bolshevist Government should like to conceal but shall not conceal from the workers of Russia, Europe and America.

It was not by accident that the northern camps were turned into prisons for socialists and anarchists. The past of these camps was well known to Moscow. They acquired their tradition in the circumstances of the civil war in the North, in the days of wholesale executions and the arbitrary rule of unbridled punitive expeditions dispatched especially to establish the communist power in the North. Here the Government sent thousands of prisoners condemned to inhuman torture. bloody punishment and shooting en masse. Thousands of Tambov peasants and Kronstadt sailors were exiled here for extermination.

And it was here to the northern concentration camps that the Government began to exile its most dangerous enemies—the socialists and anarchists.

Alongside of us are thousands of criminals, condemned to compulsory servitude, exhausted by hard, unbearable labor, subjected continuously to cruel torture, beating, and even murder at the hands of the uncontrolled, all-powerful administration which is afraid of nothing and no one

We are under an administration composed, from the bottom to the top, with rare exceptions, of criminal elements who were sent to the Solovetz Islands to serve sentences for crime and who became here the masters of the lives and deaths of thousands of people, expiating their old crimes and winning pardon for themselves at the price of cruelty, inhumanity, and new crimes.

To complete the picture—in the hands of this administration is a detachment of the Red Army serving as "guards," into whose hands systematically, persistently, the commanders are daily hammering the "simple" thought: "Socialists are the enemies of the

*The appeal, signed by 233 political prisoners, was addressed to the Socialist Workers' (Second) International, London, and to the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam. The report of the government commission on the shooting of December 19, 1923, which is the subject of this letter has not been accessible to the Editor.

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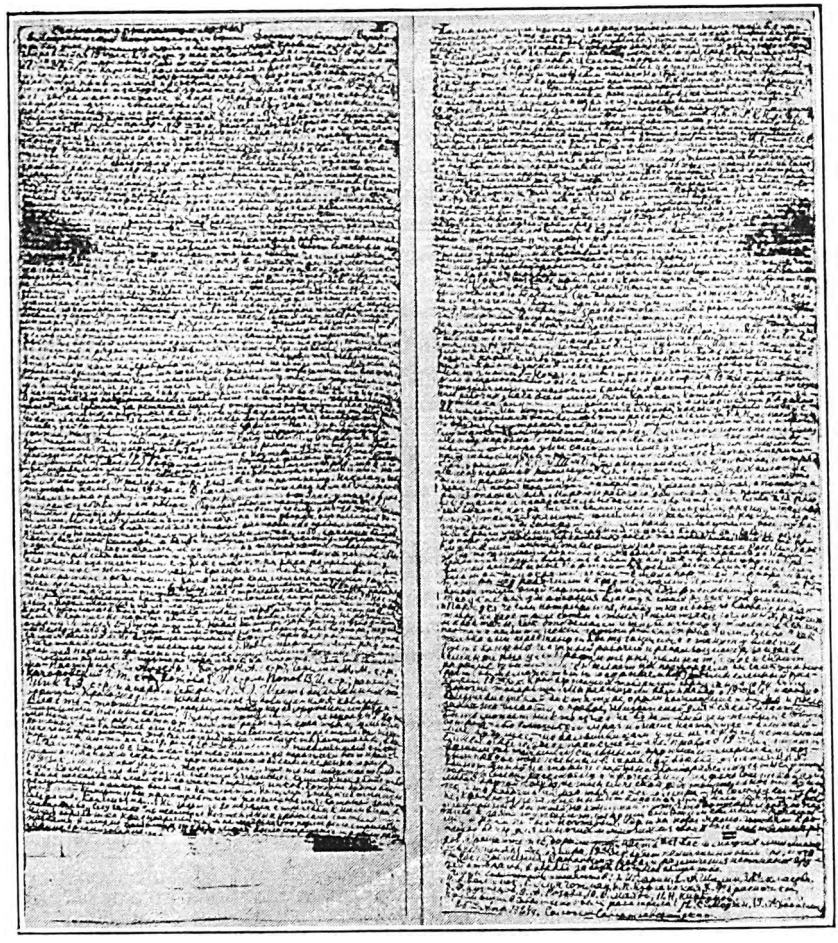

ORIGINAL TEXT AND SIZE OF LETTER HERE REPRINTED, SECRETLY MAILED FROM THE SOLOVETZ ISLANDS. TOP LINE SAYS: "READ WITH MAGNIFYING GLASS"

"Workers' and Peasants' Government, and they must be treated rough."

Such is the condition which the Bolshevist Government created for the socialists in the Solovetz concentration camp. It was very obvious from the outset that in such circumstances bloodshed was inevitable. We repeatedly wrote about it to Moscow, to the highest organs of the Government. We declared it to the representatives of the Government who came to the Solovetz Islands to inspect the concentration camp. We warned. In answer we received false promises, hypocritical assurances that everything would be all right.

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But blood flowed. The "G. P. U." provided the immediate pretext for the massacre. Not being satisfied with throwing us into the distant, dark North, hundreds of versts from a central city, away from our relatives and dear ones, the "G. P. U.", having cut us off from the whole world and having deprived us of the right of regular communication by letter, conceived the idea of turning the Solovetz concentration camp into a real jail with the ordinary prison regime.

This pretext was found at the very moment when the navigation between the Solovetz Islands and the continent was closed, and we were facing a long northern winter, long months of complete isolation from the outside world.

For a beginning it was decided to deprive us of the freedom to promenade in the prison yard, that small lot of land surrounded by barbed wire which was assigned for our use and which was carefully guarded by sentinels from several watch towers. We were not permitted to promenade outside our yard even when convoyed by soldiers, but our promenading hours were not limited. And it was this "license" which seemed terrible to the "G. P. U."

The Shooting

We were warned by the administration on December 16 that it contemplated limiting our promenading hours from 9 in the morning to 6 in the evening. The committee of elders declared a decisive protest. In the course of three days afterwards we promenaded as of old and the conversations with the administration on the subject were not renewed. Suddenly, on December 19, after 5 o'clock in the evening, the political prisoners of the Savvatievo cloister were handed a written order: Promenading is permitted in the future from 9 o'clock in the morning until 6 in the evening. The order is to be announced at the roll-call.

Since the roll-call is usually taken after 8 o'clock in the evening, it was the clear sense of the order that it would take effect the following day, December 20. Nevertheless, at half-past five, the sentinels began to request the comrades who were out in the open to return into the building, and as they continued to promenade the sentinels fired from the watch-towers several shots, apparently into the air. The promenading continued. Then a chain of soldiers and prison officials, numbering about fifty men, spread out along the fence surrounding the prison yard, covering the building from three sides. The commander of the squad turned to the absolutely peaceable promenaders with the request to enter the building, without warning once that in the event of disobedience he would fire. The promenading comrades formed the definite impression that in the worst event it was planned to push them back towards the building, almost nobody conceiving of the possibility of shooting. But after the third request to enter the building the order suddenly rang out: "Straight at the

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targets! Fire!" And immediately afterwards followed a volley and deafening continuous shooting from separate sections.

The promenading comrades failed to comprehend at first what had happened. They were convinced that the shots were made into the air to terrify them, so wild, senseless, improbable seemed the shooting of peaceful promenaders. But the first victims, the groans of the wounded, the warning cries from all sides, "There are wounded" left no doubts as to what had occurred. The murderers heard these cries, they saw how the comrades picked up those who fell and carried them in the direction of the building, but they had not had enough bloodshed yet, and after the first volley came a second and then a third volley. The firing was aimed not only at those who remained in the yard but also at those comrades who were carrying the wounded and at those returning to the building. The unanimous testimony of our comrades bears witness to it, the marks of bullets around the entrance to the building unequivocally point to it, some of these marks being at the level of a man's height, others a little above. After the third volley the yard was emptied and the firing stopped.

Claim Shooting Premeditated

It was before six o'clock when the wounded were carried into the building and we were able to count the victims. The terrible tragedy was enacted with insane, cinematographic speed. Somebody's evil will had consciously driven it, without a breathing spell, to its bloody climax. The order was to be announced at the roll-call. It was announced three hours previously. Even according to the order, the promenading was permitted until six o'clock. The killing began at half-past five and only the blood in the snow remained to tell of what had happened. Not the slightest attempt was made on the part of the administration to forestall the catastrophe. The elder of the political prisoners, who tried to make his way into the headquarters of the commandant, was not admitted by the guards, in accordance with orders. How can one define all this except as conscious, cold-blooded, premeditated murder of peaceful and defenseless people? Even the higher administration itself in the person of the acting chief of the administration of the northern camps, was compelled to admit, in a conversation with the committee of elders of the political prisoners, that the latter by their conduct offered not the slightest pretext for a bloody punishment. According to the acting chief of the administration of the camps, all that happened was a deplorable misunderstanding for which only the lower officials were culpable. The soldiers are supposed to have received an order to fire into the air. The shooting of the political prisoners was supposed to come as a complete surprise to the higher administration of the camp.

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We unconditionally reject this explanation. Neither the local commandant nor, moreover, the prison guards would have fired at the imprisoned socialists if they had not previously received assurances of their complete immunity. Of course, most of the soldiers fired into the air, otherwise the shooting would have become a wholesale massacre of the promenaders and the victims would have been counted by the score, but it is beyond any doubt that part of the soldiers and guards received orders to fire at the prisoners and that in one form or another corresponding instructions were given to the administration of the camp and the commanding officers. Just before the shooting there came to the Savvatievo cloister the chief of the department of the northern camps, Nogtev. He knew of the order to limit the promenading hours; he knew of all the preparations for the slaughter. We do not know what his orders were to the commandant, but we do know that he departed from the cloister not more than a quarter of an hour before the shooting—as his acting associate later explained naively—so that he could not be charged with the guilt of what was to take place subsequently. It indicates that having prepared the murder he hastened to wash his hands of it.

Moreover, Nogtev himself, in spite of all his conceit, would not have risked the shooting if he had not felt that Moscow would stand by him. The order to "twist the necks" of the political prisoners came from the "G. P. U." We do not know whether Nogtev was told exactly how far to go in tightening the prison regime, and what these limits were. But it is absolutely clear that the Moscow "G. P. U." inspired the higher officials of the Solovetz Islands with confidence in their non-responsibility and inviolability.

The Investigation

The entire character of the subsequent investigation of the events of December 19 fully confirms our belief that the root of these events must be sought neither among the Savvatievo soldiers nor among the criminals of the Savvatievo guards. The "investigation" began with the order of the chief of the department of the northern camps that the commandant of the cloister, the commanding officer of the military detachment, and the political agent, as the would-be real culprits, be sent back to Moscow by the last departing steamer—navigation was just then closing. (It was the political agent who, day in and day out, conducted the agitation against socialists, among the soldiers.) Such were the results of the "impartial" investigation made by the inspirers of the crime, in so far as it affected its immediate authors.

We, of course, refused to furnish any evidence to the local commission of investigation. We sent a telegram to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, in which we categorically accused the higher administration of the Solovetz concentration

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camp and the "G. P. U." of the events of December 19, and demanded the urgent appointment of a special commission of investigation without the participation of the "G. P. U."

About a month passed from the time of the shooting. Telegrams were sent from Solovetz to Moscow and from Moscow to Solovetz. The first telegram about the occurrence was dispatched from Solovetz on the night of the murder, but days passed and weeks, and the entire higher administration of the northern camps remained undisturbed in its place. The chief of the department, Nogtev, retained his full authority. Moscow kept silent.

Finally, about the middle of January, we were informed that a commission was formed in Moscow, composed of representatives of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and of the Commissariat of Justice.

Apparently, the fact of the shooting in Solovetz became public and it became impossible to conceal it. That, in all probability, explains the invitation we received to send to Moscow delegates to testify before the commission of investigation. In the circumstances of interrupted navigation, when communication with the continent is maintained by rowboats which accidentally make their way through the ice floes, we considered this invitation a mockery. We considered that the Government had at its disposal all the means, whether airplanes, an ice cutter, or something else, to convey the commission to the place where the crime was committed in order to investigate the unheard-of act. We considered that only here, in the very place where the blood of our comrades was shed, where all the witnesses and all the direct participants of the shooting could be examined, only here the threads are to be found which would lead the investigation to the tracks of the real culprits. And, above all, we did not for a minute believe in the impartiality of a commission composed of representatives of the Bolshevist Government only, which is fit in this case, according to our profound conviction, to act the role of a defendant rather than that of a judge. And we answered Moscow by demanding the admission into the commission of representatives of the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions, of the Socialist Workers' International and of the Red Cross for Political Prisoners. (Madame Peshkova's organization).

We agreed, under these conditions, to send to Moscow our delegates, even by rowboats, to testify before the investigating commission. Only a commission in which the representatives of the international proletariat participated could provide us with a minimum guarantee that the truth about December 19 would be disclosed.

Half a year has passed since then. Moscow sent us no answer. It is more than a month now since navigation has opened, more than one steamer has already arrived from the continent, but Moscow

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still continues to maintain silence, as if the crime of December 19, had never been committed.

Regime of the Summer of 1924

And everything remains as it was in the past on the Solovets Islands. The same rule of criminal elements in the administration, the same servitude for the criminal prisoners, the same eternal, constant menace to the human dignity and life of the politicals.

However, there is an innovation. A special correction prison has been established on the Sekirn Hill, where criminal prisoners are kept, for small offences, in such inhuman conditions that the men, as a sign of protest, rip open their own abdomens. The regime of penal servitude is winning new victims: hitherto it was applied only to criminals, now it has been extended to a group of Kronstadt sailors sentenced for participation in the Kronstadt revolt of 1921, as well as to students of both sexes who are exiled by the score to Solovetz for participation in the students' mass movement. They are kept like common criminals under the same regime as all the criminal prisoners, they are driven together with the latter to do hard labor, and those who are fined are thrown into the prison on the Sekirn Hill. And at the very moment we are writing these lines the Kronstadt sailors are on a hunger-strike, declared several days ago, trying to win for themselves the regime of the political prisoners.

Moreover, gradually, an effort is being made to extend the regime of penal servitude to us, socialists, too. A score of socialists, bound together by force, were brought from the continent to Solovetz and placed on a criminal regime on the pretext that there was no indication in their cases of their belonging to socialist parties. Only a hunger-strike on their part and the interference of the socialist communities saved them from penal servitude. But an effort is being made to thrust even upon us, the "recognized" socialists, who have spent a year here on a socialist regime, compulsory labor under the guise of innocent "self-service." We have been deprived of the heating service, of the bathhouse, of the laundry. We are being placed in a position unknown to the political prisoners in the jails of the czars.

And to cap all this, we are deprived of the elementary rights possessed by the inmates of any prison, the right of visits from our relatives. In spite of the fact that navigation has again opened, our relatives are persistently refused permission to visit us "until special orders are issued."

This is how Moscow reacted to the events of December 19.

It is true, a month after the shooting, the chief of the department, Nogtev, was finally called to Moscow; we do not know whether in the capacity of a defendant or a witness. But several weeks later he returned to Solovetz, in his capacity of chief of the department,

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with his former rights and powers, as if nothing had happened. Moscow would not betray "her man." She supported "the prestige of the Government." She exonerated Nogtev. She pronounced her own sentence: "Not guilty," assuming herself all the guilt of the bloodshed. . . . .

In the name of socialism we protest before the world proletariat against the policy of bloody terror being perpetrated on the socialists of Russia.

And we know, our protest will find a fraternal response in the heart of every honest workingman, of every socialist.

(Signed) Socialist Community of the Savvatievo Cloister:

1. Group of Socialist-Revolutionists.
2. Group of Social-Democrats.
3. Group of Left Socialist-Revolutionists.

Added signatures:

1. Social-Democratic Community of the Muksolm Cloister.
2. Group of Socialist-Revolutionists.
3. Group of Left Socialist-Revolutionists.
4. Group of Social-Democrats in the Solovetz Kremlin.

1	Feldman	30	Buchter	59	Zarin
2	Rubinstein	31	Derkotovskaia	60	Menschikov
3	Filippov	32	Afabassiev	61	Maurin
4	Melinovski	33	Kiné	62	Michailov
5	Belkin	34	Wasserman	63	Puzyrev
6	Keropian	35	Brodova	64	Sevastianov
7	Tchotkin	36	Kondratiev	65	Kerepulov
8	Gold	37	Podbielski	66	Vercholenski
9	Skripnitchenko	38	Kondratenko	67	Enseld
10	Pavlotzki	39	Yakovlev	68	Solovieva
11	Popov	40	Wobrovolski	69	Ketassonova
12	Bogatov	41	Dobrovolskaia	70	Studenetzki
13	Shik	42	Bortz	71	Volski
14	Konogov	43	Tarassov	72	Sauerbrei
15	Iliassov	44	Yeremin	73	Primak
16	Kassatkin	45	Patruschev	74	Wolk-Istotzki
17	Fedosseyev	46	Schestakov	75	Charachinova
18	Tugarin	47	Landé	76	Zeitlin
19	Filippovski	48	Riumin	77	Medvedev
20	Wassilenko	49	Kotov	78	Gubin
21	Golodkov	50	Veltchanski	79	Udalov
22	Ivanitzki	51	Radin	80	Bukarev
23	Muchin	52	Gnedov	81	Shmelev
24	Popov, A.	53	Stern	82	Poletiko
25	Tarabukin	54	Ivanov	83	Nikolaev
26	Sizych	55	Rudakov	84	Gabriele
27	Muranova	56	Metropolski	85	Merchalev, D.
28	Yuditcheva	57	Lande, M.	86	Merchalev, V.
29	Chastnevskaia	58	Heimbuch	87	Nadezhin

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88 Greisser
89 Chommer
90 Yutzia
91 Reisner
92 Predit
93 Pamfilov
94 Libythin
95 Krintchik
96 Adamushka
97 Furman
98 Svirskaia
99 Leontieva
100 Andreiewskaia
101 Sarianski
102 Feinberg
103 Shepshelevitch
104 Yevdokimov
105 Prokofiev
106 Flegontov
107 Dubinski
108 Helfgott
109 Bogdanov
110 Malkin, A.
111 Malkin, S.
112 Korobkov
113 Trachtenberg, V.
114 Trachtenberg, D.
115 Diuzhakova
116 Sapir
117 Zimin
118 Treiger
119 Asnis
120 Gurvitch
121 Kuprimova
122 Yakubson, L.
123 Yakubson, I.
124 Rubinstein, V.
125 Zaitchik
126 Liubimov
127 Rozhkovski
128 Babin
129 Yudov
130 Yudin
131 Frolov
132 Yunkerov
133 Kotcharovski
134 Kokin
135 Rapiport
136 Bloch
137 Himmelfarb
138 Stern, L.
139 Tolpareva
140 Kogan
141 Elman
142 Eisenberg
143 Berezin
144 Auslander
145 Opeskina
146 Rabkina
147 Kohn
148 Fleishmacher
149 Keilis
150 Alymova
151 Spivak
152 Zeitlin, S.
153 Bialovski
154 Shimshelevitch
155 Poplak
156 Beliaev
157 Dmitrieva
158 Lazareva
159 Strunskaya
160 Ossovski
161 Eghis
162 Kritchevski, E.
163 Lurie, P. E.
164 Bernstein, I.
165 Skeghich, M.
166 Meirov, M. S.
167 Skolonenko, M. S.
168 Kushin, I. A.
169 Kushina, M. A.
170 Gorelik, S.
171 Kantarovitch, M.
172 Zammel, M. G.
173 Mash
174 Zolotarev
175 Itzelitz
176 Treiger, U.
177 Hershevitch, M.
178 Stackelberg, I.
179 Baryshpolski
180 Heyman
181 Eliasberg
182 Safonov
183 Kofman-Petrovsk
184 Kapell
185 Braude, S.
186 Selderychin
187 Shapiro
188 Breitman
189 Rosem
190 Kompaneyetz
191 Pekerskaia
192 Choroshin
193 Yelnik, V. I.
194 Konstantinovski,
195 Samarin-Spitzyn,
196 Schneider, I. A.
197 Kupin
198 Kranichfeld, A.
199 Salnikov, V.
200 Sandomirskaia, M.
201 Vitkup, L.
202 Troyanski, S. F.
203 Tiunina
204 Weinzweig
205 Sternberg
206 Zhdanov, A. P.
207 Huberman
208 Roganis, M. O.
209 Massover
210 Chaimovitch
211 Popov
212 Volkov
213 Samokhvalov
214 Panov
215 Filatov
216 Groshev
217 Skvortzov
218 Eruchimovitch
219 Abakshin
220 Ivanov
221 Gussev
222 Beinarovitch
223 Golovina
224 Markman
225 Riabinin
226 Baron
227 Broverman
228 Vladimirov
229 Ganshina
230 Kevrik
231 Lebedev
232 Veger (Mrs.)
233 Stepnaya

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PLACING THE RESPONSIBILITY

(From Context, December 20, 1923)

To the Commission of Inquiry into the Events of December 19, 1923.*

In reply to the proposal made by the assistant chief of the department of the northern concentration camps that we furnish the commission appointed by this department evidence regarding the shooting which took place on December 19, we declare the following:

We are of the opinion that a real inquiry into this case can be conducted only by persons who are in no way connected either with the direct or with the indirect initiators of the shooting. The membership of the aforementioned commission unquestionably fails to satisfy this condition, for which reason we refuse to assist in the investigation which it will conduct and are resorting to the present declaration.

On December 16, 1923, the assistant chief of the northern camps, Mr. Eichmans, while at Savvatievo, announced in the course of personal conversations with the committee of elders that political prisoners, according to the orders of the "G. P. U.", would be permitted to promenade only during the day, i. e., from daybreak to sunset. He further stated that the department of the northern camps, taking as the duration of a day the standard of the Moscow and Petrograd zone, limited the time for being out in the open air from 9 in the morning to 6 in the evening. He said that this order would be executed with the utmost rigor.

In reply to this announcement the committee of elders declared that regulating the promenading hours was unacceptable to the political prisoners, since it was the first step in the introduction of a prison regime. After the conversation with Eichmans the political prisoners of the Savvatievo camp continued to promenade at diverse hours, in the daytime as well as late in the evening. On December 19, at the beginning of the sixth hour in the afternoon, the keeper then on duty at the camp came into the room of the elder of the socialist-revolutionist group, Ivanitzky, and brought him an order, or, more correctly, a copy of an order to sign, *bearing no signature* except that of the clerk.

The elder Ivanitzky, after acquainting himself with the contents of the order, from the text of which it was difficult to establish who had issued it, declared to the keeper on duty that one of the elders would go to the commandant to examine the question both of the nature of the order and of its author, but in the meantime, for the reasons stated above, the elder Ivanitzky refused to attach his signature to it. Two or three minutes later the keeper on duty came

*This letter signed by Socialist prisoners in Solovetz Camp was received by the Foreign Delegation of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia in Berlin.

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back, carrying the same order,* which, however, was now signed by Commandant Rosenthal. In Ivanitzky's room there were at the time the elder of the social-democratic group, Bogdanov, and the political prisoner Muchin. Both elders signed the order, again pointing out to the keeper on duty that the elder Bogdanov would go to the commandant to discuss the order.

As regards the order itself, it dealt with, first, the regulation of the electric light, and, second, the question of promenading, in the same manner as Eichmans treated it in his last conversation. Also, there was further reference to the effect that the order, dated December 19, must be announced at the roll-call; therefore, at 8 the same evening, to inform the political prisoners of it and to settle with them the questions of promenading and of electric light.

Thus it is obvious from the text of the order itself that the prohibition to promenade after 6 in the evening could not refer to December 19, for, according to the meaning of the order, it should have been announced at roll-call, i. e., at 8 o'clock. Several minutes after the departure of the keeper on duty, single shots were heard. The elder Ivanitzky went out into the court; just then the shooting stopped and soon a chain of soldiers started from the gates of the building occupied by the anarchists and spread out along the fence. The elder Ivanitzky attempted to get through to the commandant, but those who stood at the doors leading to the commandant's headquarters held him up with the words, "You can't see the commandant." In this way, in spite of the repeated warning to the keeper on duty that one of the elders of the socialist community would come to the commandant to discuss the issued order, the administration of the camp took measures not to permit negotiations between the elder and the commandant. This furnished ground for the assertion that the shooting of the unarmed political prisoners was premeditated and prepared by someone. The following fact strengthens us in this assertion: On the day of the shooting, at the order of the commandant, the hours were struck from the belfry. About two hours before the shooting, the commandant, conversing with the elders Ivanitzky and Broverman, said that he now had a spare man whom he commissioned, as he expressed it, "to gong the time." Nevertheless, in spite of the availability of this spare man, the belfry remained silent both at five and at six o'clock. The shooting proper commenced before six o'clock, which fact we ascertained from the testimony of those comrades who carried watches. We have no other way of knowing the time, as the clock at the commandant's headquarters is either an hour slow or an hour fast, which is the reason why the elders would usually arrange with the commandant, whenever a definite schedule was set that the agreed hour would be struck from the belfry.

*See the order on page 208.

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Description of the Shooting

The general outline of the shooting proper of December 19 presents itself as follows: The first shots were fired at the group of political prisoners promenading alongside the stone building, on its northern side. These shots came from the watch-tower nearest to the entrance to the camp. There were six or eight shots. Soon afterwards a chain of soldiers was formed along the hedge between the gates leading to the building occupied by the anarchists and the gates leading to the Issakovo road. The main body of promenading political prisoners was at this moment on a line running from the chapel down, and also on the adjacent paths among the trees. Nowhere, however, did the political prisoners approach the chain of soldiers closely. After some lapse of time the voice of the commanding officer of the squad was heard: "Political prisoners, go to your quarters!" Two minutes later the warning was repeated, and then it was repeated for the third time; however, not one of the warnings was accompanied by a threat to employ arms. During the intervals between the warnings, several political prisoners, who were nearer than the others to the chain of soldiers, which by that time had spread out even along the lake, heard some persons instructing the soldiers with the following phrases: "Hit them between the eyes. Don't allow yourselves to be beaten!" "If they should attack, use the bayonets!" "Don't stand on ceremony, it's time to begin!" After the third warning, about two minutes later, the order was heard: "Straight at the targets, Fire!" which was followed by a volley and then scattered firing. The first shots killed the socialists Meyer Gorelik and Bilima-Pasternak and wounded the socialist Shik and the anarchist Lebedev. The shots were fired when the majority of the political prisoners was retreating from the chain of soldiers, which is the reason why most of the wounds were in the backs of the victims. During the firing many lay down in the snow. The shooting, however, continued at those lying down.

When the firing stopped, voices were heard from several directions: "There are wounded!" The voices were sufficiently numerous and loud so that they could not but be heard by the men who were shooting as well as by those who were in charge of it. Simultaneously the political prisoners began to pick up the comrades who were hit and to carry them into the building. In spite of all this a new order was heard: "Load for a second round!" and then came the order: "Straight at the targets! Fire!" There followed a second volley, after which some scattered firing, so that the men who carried the wounded were forced to put them down on the ground and to lie down themselves. These shots killed the socialists Katchorovsky, Kotova, Bauer, and wounded the socialist Veevoled Popov. Katchorovsky was hit by five bullets. The firing covered the entire square on which the political prisoners were found, and although most of

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the victims were in the main alley there were also killed and wounded in other places, particularly near the chapel, which is situated a few feet away from the building. There are bullet marks near the doors of the building itself. The firing was conducted from three sides: from the gates to the building occupied by the anarchists, from the gates to the Issakovo road, and from the ice-bound lake. Some shots were taken at the building proper. Thus, one of the bullets fired from the watch-tower nearest to the bathhouse lodged in the kitchen; in addition, there are bullet marks on the building at other places, and most of these marks are at a level below a man's height. After the second round of shots there followed a third round, aimed at the prisoners returning to the building.

All of the foregoing convinces us that we have here a case not only of preparation for the shooting, but of a desire to bring about that end. That explains the extraordinary haste in carrying out the order to limit the promenading hours, which was utterly unexpected to the political prisoners. That is the reason why the committee of elders was deprived of the opportunity of averting in one way or another the event. That is the reason why the shooting commenced before six o'clock in the evening. And it was for that very reason that the administration itself took no measures at all to avoid the bloody outrage, without even trying to achieve its goal by other means. And, finally, it was for that very reason that the entire operation was executed with exceptional cruelty shown by the facts that several of our comrades were killed by the first shots, that the shooting was conducted from three sides, that shots were fired at the backs of retreating people, at persons lying on the ground, at the wounded and at those who were carrying them.

(Signatures.)

December 20, 1923.*

REPLY OF THE SOCIALIST PRISONERS TO MOSCOW

(January 18, 1924)

To the Assistant Chief of the Department of the Northern Camps, Mr. Eichmans, to be submitted to the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:†

In reply to your proposal that we send representatives for the purpose of furnishing evidence to the Commission of Inquiry of the Central Executive Committee of the Union regarding the shooting

*In the Russian copy of this letter sent from Solovetz by the prisoners, the date was omitted, but it is probable that it was written by the socialists at this date.

†The Russian text of this letter bears the title, "Reply of the Socialist Community of the Savvatievo Camp to the Commission of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics." For the sake of brevity the form, "Central Executive Committee of the Union" is employed throughout the book instead of the full title.

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of socialists and anarchists which took place at the Savvatievo Cloister on December 19, 1923, we, the imprisoned socialists, declare:

The appointment of a bureaucratic commission from among representatives of the Central Executive Committee of the Union, of the Central Control Commission of the Russian Communist Party, and of the Commissariat of Justice does in no way guarantee to any degree an impartial investigation of the events of December 19. The work of the Commission itself will be carried on in conditions of secrecy and of a complete absence of publicity. This Commission is composed exclusively of representatives of the ruling party that is entirely responsible for the unexampled regime of terror which is systematically being perpetrated by the Government throughout the country and which is now entering a new phase, that of direct murder as regards the socialists and anarchists who had been confined in jails without trial for a period of years.

Not wishing to lend an appearance of unbiased investigation by assisting in such an inquiry, we refuse to send our representatives for the purpose of furnishing evidence to this Commission. On account of the wrecking of the workers' organizations in Russia and of the abolition of any legal public opinion, we demand a public inquiry and the inclusion in the Commission of Inquiry of representatives of the "Relief of Political Prisoners".* We categorically demand also the admission to the inquiry of representatives of the Workers' Socialist International and the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions for the purpose of an impartial investigation and for the information of all the revolutionary socialist organizations of Western Europe. Only such a commission can provide the minimum guarantees of a broad and all-sided investigation. Only such a commission can bring into relief the full picture of the events of December 19 and of their connection with the general condition of the socialists and anarchists under the existing regime of terror, as well as the responsibility of the entire Bolshevist Party and the Central Government for these events. To such a commission we shall send our representatives to furnish evidence. In the event of the acceptance of this condition, we declare that in spite of the fact that the Solovetz Islands are cut off from the mainland during the entire winter, our representatives will proceed to Moscow, even if they have to cross the sea on rowboats, so as to shed light through their participation in the Commission on the crime of December 19.

On behalf of the Socialist Community of the Savvatievo Cloister:

A. IVANITZKY, for the Socialist-Revolutionists.
S. ZEITLIN, for the Social-Democrats.
SAMOKHVALON, for the Left Socialist-Revolutionists.

January 18, 1924, Solovetz Islands.
Savvatievo Cloister.

*Mme. Peshkova, "Political Red Cross".

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PROTEST FROM MUKSOLM POLITICAL PRISONERS

(Probably January, 1924)

To the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:

The political prisoners of the Muksolm Cloister of the Solovetz concentration camp deem it necessary to make the following statement:

The Solovetz Islands, serving as they do as a place for the isolation of socialists and anarchists, are by the very nature of their topograhy completely cut off from the mainland during the greater part of the year, and therefore satisfy all the requirements of isolation in the most perfect manner. But the leading organs of the Soviet Government and of the Russian Communist Party are apparently not satisfied with our mere isolation from the outside world. The authorities are now promulgating a state of mutual isolation among the already isolated socialists, limiting communication between the cloisters, and limiting by means of barbed wire the walking grounds.

Certain members of the administration and the entire staff of keepers consist of agents of the "G. P. U." who are serving sentences for criminal acts. The policy of the Soviet Government towards the socialists on the Solovetz Islands is personified by the chief of the department of the northern camps, Mr. Nogtev, who himself expressed the essence of this policy in the following sentence which he addressed to a group of socialist-revolutionists sent from Siberia to Archangelsk:

"I cannot understand why you declare a hunger-strike. If you wish to end your lives by suicide, better take a rope and hang yourselves."

Several months of living on the Solovetz Islands, spent in an atmosphere of violence, provocation, arbitrary and arrogant rule, have made it obvious to us that the Soviet Government had set before itself as an actual aim the physical extermination of the socialists and anarchists, and not their isolation. We had declared this to the commission under the chairmanship of Feldman, which arrived after the provocative, forcible transfer of our bound prisoners from the Solovetz Kremlin to the Muksolm cloister. We warned, in his person, the government that the continuation of the provocative policy, in spite of our restraint, will inevitably result in blood. Events have justified our declarations. The socialist-revolutionist Sandomir committed suicide in the Muksolm cloister. During the funeral already it almost came to a bloody conflict, which was fortunately averted, thanks to the self-restraint of the socialist community, in spite of the openly provocative conduct of the "G. P. U.," the respon-

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sible representative of which, Mr. Bokyi, was at the time on the Solovetz Islands.

Later, in the same Muksolm cloister, the social-democrat Yegorov went insane. Finally, in the Savvatievo cloister, as a result of an order to the "G. P. U." limiting the promenading hours, an order contemplating the inevitability of a conflict arising from its application, a bloody event occurred. The troops of the "G. P. U." and the keepers shot at socialist and anarchist prisoners who were peacefully promenading. The shooting was done in volleys, wholesale, shots being fired at those who fell to the ground as well as at those who were carrying out the wounded. We know that the conduct of the "G. P. U." towards the socialists and anarchists imprisoned on the Solovetz Islands is an inevitable result of the entire policy of terror applied by the Soviet Government to socialists and anarchists. And we therefore have no doubts that new sacrifices are in store for us.

(Signatures)

January, 1924.*

PROTEST OF THE KREMLIN POLITICALS

(Probably January 1924)

To the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:

The political prisoners, socialists and anarchists, confined in the Kremlin of the Solovetz Concentration Camp, declare:

The fatal shooting of five and the wounding of three of the political prisoners, socialists and anarchists, perpetrated on December 19, 1923, by the keepers and guards of the Savvatievo cloister of the Solovetz concentration camp, cannot but evoke the most profound indignation and protest of all the political prisoners confined in the Kremlin of the same camp, whose signatures appear below.

The arbitrary slaughter of our comrades who were peacefully promenading within the limits of the fence surrounding their cloister is a natural consequence of the unexampled cruel terror which the Government has been systematically employing against socialists and anarchists during the last few years. Only on such a soil could have been born that sense of utter irresponsibility which guided those who carried out the killing. Having delivered us, political prisoners, socialists and anarchists, to the arbitrary rule of the keepers consisting of elements who had committed certain criminal acts while in the service of the "G .P. U.," the Government thereby doomed us from the very outset to bloody horrors. . . .

(Signatures)

January, 1924.‡

*It would seem that this statement was addressed to the Central Executive Committee at the same time as the preceding letter, about January 18.

‡This letter too was apparently written simultaneously with letter above, about January 18.

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ORDER OF THE COMMANDANT OF SECTION TWO*

2. Open-air exercises of any kind in the evening as well as at night, such as has been practiced heretofore, is to be stopped for political prisoners, and is permitted by me from 9 o'clock in the morning to 6 in the evening, after which hour being out in the open is prohibited, with the exception of individuals passing from one building to another, because of personal reasons. This paragraph is to be punctiliously and unalterably carried out, and is to be announced at the roll-call to the committee of elders of the political prisoners for communication to the political prisoners and for the regulation of this question with them. In the event of any conflicts arising from the non-execution and violation of this order by the political prisoners, and of all possible consequences of the execution by the administration of the present order, all the responsibility rests with the committee of elders.

Authority: The order of the Central "G. P. U." and of the Department of the Northern Concentration Camps of the "G. P. U.," of December 13, 1923, No. 257.

(Signed ROSENTHAL,
December 19, 1923. Commandant of Section Two.

POLITICALS' TELEGRAM TO MOSCOW†

(Probably December 19th or 20th, 1923)

To the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics:

On December 19, at 5:30 in the evening, for refusing to obey the sudden order to stop walking in the open air, the peacefully promenading political prisoners of the Savvatievo Concentration Camp were fired upon repeatedly from three sides.

Killed—The socialists Natalia Bauer, Elizabeth Kotova, George Katchorovsky, Gavril Bilima, Meyer Gorelik.

Wounded—The socialists George Shik, Vesevolod Popov and the anarchist Leonid Lebedev.

Holding the "G. P. U.," in the person of its central organs or its local agents, guilty of the committed crime, we demand the urgent appointment of a special commission, without representation in it of the "G. P. U.," and with the participation of the "Relief for Political Prisoners," for the purpose of investigating the occurrence.

Signed)
COMMITTEE OF ELDERS OF THE
December 19, 1823 SAVVATIEVO CONCENTRATION CAMP.

*Paragraph 1 of this order dealt with the question of turning off the electric light in the camp at midnight.

†This is the text of the official message telegraphed by the committee representing the political prisoners of the Solovetz Islands to the Soviet Government immediately after the shooting on the fateful December 19.

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IS RELIEF NEEDED?

NOTE: These letters came legally out of Solovetz Camp, and were passed by the censor of the camp. One of the writers, Tcharyn, had suffered terribly in the Pertominsk Camp before transfer to Solovetz. (See page 182 et seq.) The other, Leah Gotman, was sent to Solovetz because she had reported on conditions in Pertominsk camp. (See page 182.) Among the documents not printed in this volume chiefly because of lack of space, is a letter dated July 7th, 1924 from Leah Gutman describing her arrest and deportation via Berezov (a place four thousand versts from Moscow) to Solovetz. The letter here reproduced is one of several asking for relief.

Solovky, October 2nd, 1924.

Dear C.:

We have now received four letters from you. The first to L., June 28th; later two letters of September 1st, to me and L. Your last I received yesterday, dated September 8th, in which you enclose fifteen dollars. What a pleasure it is to receive letters from you. my dears! How pleasant it is to know that we are not alone, that somewhere, to somebody, we are objects of interest and solicitude. You bluntly ask us our needs. Well, we are not too proud and will answer quite frankly. In the two letters before the last Leah already wrote about this. Being uncertain whether you received these letters, I'll devote a few words to our needs. In the first place, some of us have worn out our clothes and therefore need clothing badly. Caps, a few blankets, and other small things, socks, stockings, etc. Secondly: Food for everybody, such as potatoes, herring, krupa (a cereal), and so on, which we can buy if you send us money. Thirdly: For our sick. send us, if you can, a parcel of healthful, nourishing food; for instance, cocoa, cheese, any kind of conserve, salted foods, etc. Yes, tea is needed. The boys are also asking for tobacco and cigarettes. That, in general, is what we are in need of. It is understood, of course, that you shouldn't hesitate to cut down our list, if it is too big. I want to ask you to subscribe to one or two newspapers, a liberal and a communist one, which could reach us. Try the Yiddische "Freie Arbeiterstimme." Some literature also concerning art. I would like something of ours, but certainly that would be wasted outlay. But try, anyway. I am ending my letter. All the comrades are sending you warm greetings, and their fraternal thanks for your interest. Greetings to friend Krepla. I press your hand.

VANYA TCHARYN.

Dear Friend:

I sent you a letter on September 26th. And now I want to take your hand to press it warmly. I want to believe that sometime, somewhere, we may meet again. Warm greetings to all the comrades.

LEA.

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OFFICIAL REPORT ON SOLOVETZ
(October 1924)

An investigation of conditions on the Solovetz Islands was made at the end of September and the beginning of October by a Russian Government commission. The summary of the report was published in the *International Press Correspondence* of October 29 and signed by N. Krasikov:

At the end of September and the beginning of October, myself and my assistant, Comrade Katanyan, thoroughly investigated the state af affairs in the transfer prison in Kemi and in the Solovetz camp as a whole. We did this in the presence of Comrade Boki, a member of the Board of the Amalgamated State Political Department.*

I.

The Kemsky center is a transfer prison where those who are either being sent to Solovki or have been released from there are kept for a while either waiting for the arrival of the steamer, or for the expiration of their term of exile, should that coincide with the closing of the navigation season. This year this center has been thoroughly reorganized, all the buildings (built, by the way, by the British for their landing) have been put in thorough repair. They are provided with good stoves, kitchens, an infirmary, with a dispensary, and an adequate medical staff. Communication with Solovki is maintained regularly by two steamers which were thoroughly repaired in the Solovetz workshops. It takes two hours to cross the strait to Solovetz. Thus, the journey from Moscow to Solovetz takes thirty-six to thirty-eight hours.

The Solovetz camp itself and the islands have so many interesting features that it would take a whole volume to describe them. I will limit myself to a general outline.

. . . It is a great mistake to imagine that Solovetz is a dreary and dark prison where people are lingering in crowded and close confinement. The camp is a huge economic organism in which 3,000 workers are employed in various branches of industry. Space will allow only of a short description of the various forms of work. These include—cutting timber in the vast forests of the island, fishing and catching seals, cattle breeding and dairy farming (this year the camp is almost self-supporting as far as milk and meat are concerned), vegetable growing, keeping the existing canals in order, and extending the system of canals which provide the island with electricity and connect up scores of lakes on the island (a new power station is being built), laying new narrow railway lines, building a distillery, metal, ship-building, furniture, pottery, and china, boot-making, clothes-making, factories and workshops, tanneries, etc.. attendants in the

*"G. P. U."

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Russian bath, dining halls and kitchens, stables, hospitals, dispensaries—in fact, doing everything which is conducive to making Solovki to a considerable extent a self-supporting economic organism. All this work is carried out by the common criminals under the supervision of the administration of the camps with the assistance of a paid technical staff and the staff of the administration. These staffs have at their disposal the service of experts and technicians from among the prisoners. Thus, those who are confined in the camp only rest and eat and sleep in the premises allotted them, spending the remaining time—8 hours—at their work in the forest, on the sea, in the workshops, factories, etc., where supervision is not rigorous. It should be stated most emphatically that during the current year much has been achieved in connection with improved economic conditions in the camp and bettering the conditions of labor and life of those incarcerated in the camp. The principle that people are not sent to prison to be punished merely, but to be made useful members of society is applied to the full in Solovki where remission of sentences depends on the conduct of prisoners and on the way in which they do the work allotted them. This year 350 prisoners were liberated before expiration of their sentences by a commission consisting of representatives of the regional state political department and the prosecuting magistrates. These prisoners were conspicuous for their good conduct and efficiency in performing the work allotted to them in the camp. Among them were 16 sailors who had participated in the Kronstadt uprising.

Food rations and accommodation are, generally speaking, satisfactory. although better accommodation is provided for so-called political offenders.

Cultural and educational work is by no means neglected, for the camp is provided with a library, with papers and periodicals, lectures and study circles (literature, art, singing, instrumental music, sports, botany, etc.) are being held, and the camp has also a theatre and an orchestra. The common criminals publish a periodical, "The Elephant," which deals with social and political matters. Friends and relations are allowed to visit the prisoners.

Naturally, winter is the hardest time for the inhabitants of the island, as navigation stops for five months, and connection between Solovki and the rest of the world is maintained through post and radio. In this connection, educational and cultural activities assume a very important role.

The parts of the camp where so-called political offenders are kept are entirely separated from the rigorous but regular and busy life which we have just described. They are situated in three former hermitages in various parts of the archipelago ten to twelve versts from the center of Solovetz life and activities. The premises allotted them are the best on the islands—they are former monastery buildings, are

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well built and provided with wood heating. The rooms are spacious and light with a beautiful view on to the sea and forest. They do not look in the least like prison cells; there are no bars before the windows and no guards inside the buildings. The inhabitants are Anarchists, Social Democrats, and Socialist-Revolutionaries who are left to themselves in the buildings within a considerable area converted into gardens and a vegetable garden inclosed by barbed wire. Anarcho-Socialists do not take part in any work performed in workshops or otherwise, except that they have to prepare their meals from the foodstuffs provided by the administration and received as voluntary contributions. We visited everyone of the buildings of these parts of the camp and found them very satisfactory, except that the floors in the buildings which are in the care of the prisoners themselves were badly swept and dirty. Two of the hermitages are lighted by electricity until midnight, while one hermitage has oil lighting but will soon be provided with a small power station. In the rooms we did not find any trace of work whatever. We were informed that the political prisoners were on principle against regularly organized work which they considered compulsory and an infringement of their right to spend their time as they wanted. The administration of the camp finds it very difficult to enforce the principle of self-service, as far as the prisoners' direct needs are concerned. It has not yet been able to make satisfactory arrangements for the preparation of wood for the political prisoners' own needs, although the quantity required does not exceed 250-300 cubic sazhens (1 sazhen equals 7 feet), namely not more than two-thirds of a cubic sazhen per person on an average.

The ration provided for political offenders by the administration, as far as its nutritive quality is concerned, is much better than the ration for the ordinary criminals on the island and is even a little better than that provided for the Red Army. It consists of two pounds of bread, 48 zolotnik (about half a pound) of buckwheat, 48 zolotnik of meat, 72 zolotnik of salt or fresh fish, 12 zolotnik of fats, 18 zolotnik of oil, one pound of vegetables, 2 zolotnik of onions, 12 zolotnik of sugar per day, and one pound of tobacco per month. There is also a dietetic ration for those who require better feeding, which consists of two pounds of white bread, fresh fish, dried vegetables, milk and butter. During the winter in 1923-1924 there were periods when fresh meat, onions, and fresh vegetables were replaced by pickled cabbage and preserved meat or fish, because during the first year of its existence the camp was not sufficiently provided with cattle and vegetables.

It should also be borne in mind that political offenders have the great advantage over ordinary criminals of receiving parcels from outside containing wheaten flour, butter, sugar, chocolate, cocoa, and other nourishing foods, unlimited quantities of which can be supplied to the political prisoners, about 500-600 poods a year (1 pood equals

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36 English pounds). There are at present between 320 and 330 political prisoners—men, women, and children. Some of the latter were born on the island and others were brought there by their parents and live with their families.

Walks and outdoor exercise during the winter season are permitted all day long up to 6 P. M. Business intercourse of all kinds between different buildings may be carried on even until later. The prisoners are evidently well provided with warm clothes, for, although they insist on a regular supply, they oppose any control over the clothes in their possession.

The exiles are organized according to their party factions, and every faction has its elders for the conduct of affairs within the camp and for relations with the administration of the camp.

There is a hospital in the central camp with an adequate medical staff. Every camp has its own ward under the control of an experienced medical assistant. The infirmary doctors visit the hermitages, and in some cases when necessary the sick are taken to the central infirmary or to the mainland. Since the establishment of the camp there has not been a single case of medical assistance having been refused to a sick person. Statements in foreign emigrant papers about the sickness (sic) and helplessness of those who are ill are cold-blooded and calculated lies. In addition to the official staff there are in every hermitage doctors among the prisoners who look after the patients together with the manager of the ward. Provision of medicines has never been refused. To our knowledge, during the current year two thousand rubles worth of medicines were provided. According to statements of the head doctor, only dietetical medical stuffs or cosmetics have been refused. Those who stand in need of a climatic change and of systematic treatment are released from Solovki and sent to the mainland.

According to the statement of the medical staff, political prisoners need much more medical attendance than the other prisoners who lead a busy life. The absence of systematic physical work has naturally a very detrimental effect on their health, as physical exercise is essential in this climate during the winter. It has been proved to the hilt that the worst thing one can do in a northern climate is—to lie around all day long and with a book in one's hands. Such a regime cannot make the organism impervious to scurvy and other complaints. During the spring of 1924 there were signs of scurvy but not in a virulent form. They were successfully dealt with by issuing "scurvy" rations, and scurvy soon abated.

On the whole we have every reason to say that on the strength of the statistics and material supplied by the sanitary authorities, the state of health of the political prisoners in Solovki is very satisfactory indeed. This is also borne out by the reports and letters of relatives who come to see the political prisoners, as well as by the general ap-

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pearance of the prisoners themselves. Since the establishment of the infirmary there has not been a single death. Serious diseases, such as brain diseases, syphilis, tuberculosis, neurasthenia, and dental defects already existed among some of the prisoners when they came to the camp. The after effects of abortions brought about by the political prisoners themselves might have had serious consequences had it not been for timely medical assistance. Medical statistics show that women political prisoners suffer much more from gynecological complaints than the other women prisoners who do not live in the same premises with the men; this is the case with political prisoners. There is every reason to believe that the political prisoners are on the whole hostile to the administration and to the Soviet social order in general; this cannot be said of the other prisoners. The life they lead can be characterized as an anarcho-intellectual form of life with all its negative sides. Continued idleness, harping on political dissensions, family quarrels, fractional disputes, and above all an aggressive and hostile attitude towards the government in general and towards the local administration and the Red Army guards in particular, decided disinclination to be reconciled with the necessity to isolate them as socially pernicious elements—all this combined makes these three hundred and odd people hostile to every measure and every attempt of the local authorities to introduce regularity and organization into their lives, even if only in connection with individual service. They antagonize the Red Army guards by their disrespectful and hostile attitude to them in the performance of their duty. They are also disliked and treated with contempt by the common criminals because of their idleness and their indolent and anarchic form of life, despite the fact that they receive better rations than prisoners who work eight hours a day. One must not forget the fruits of the labor of ordinary criminals goes to a certain extent to satisfy the needs of people whom they consider to be parasites, and who receive, besides, luxuries from their relatives and friends, which ordinary criminals never have a chance to see or taste. As a rule, common criminals recognize their short-comings and crimes against the workers' and peasants' social order, and endeavor to shorten the terms of their sentences by their work and exemplary conduct. On the other hand, Anarchist or Socialist-Revolutionary prisoners consider themselves, or pretend to consider themselves, to have been right when they helped the home and foreign bourgeoisie with all their might to overthrow the workers' and peasants' government. The Anarchist political prisoners, who evidently set the tone for the others, do not recognize any organized authority, hence they do not recognize anyone's right to isolate them. They categorically protest against life in Solovki mainly on the plea that for five months of the year they are isolated from direct relations with relatives and people who share their views. All this makes the task of the local administration very difficult indeed,

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as it is impossible to fulfill the main demand of the Anarcho-Socialists —their transfer to the mainland—without the decision of the central authority. The local administration has tried to influence these people and to make them amenable to the light duties imposed on them by all manner of small concessions.

THE SITUATION IN "SOLOVKI" WITH REGARD TO THE LATEST HUNGER-STRIKE (OCTOBER, 1924)

NOTE. This statement was printed in part in the New York "Nation", in the number of April 4, 1925, devoted to Civil Rights in Russia. In that same number was reprinted, also only in part, the report of Krassikov, Soviet official, who visited Solovetz in September, 1924. This statement issued by the Foreign Office, is based largely on that Krassikov report, as will be seen by a comparison of the present document with the report reproduced above, and by the admission of this fact in the last paragraph of this statement.

No. 30822.

October 10, 1924.

The Department of the Press announces the following in relation to Menshevik agitation, as preliminary material on the hunger-strike in the Solovetz Camps:

There are in the Solovki 327 political prisoners and 4,000 criminals. The strike started at noon, October 3rd. 46 per cent of the political prisoners, exclusively Socialist-Revolutionists and Anarchists, are taking part in it. Mensheviks do not participate. It is necessary to call attention to the fact that the Menshevik, Abramovitch, spoke at the conference of the Independent Labor Party in England about the hunger-strike before it commenced. From the material recently published in the *Isvestia* (Tuesday, September 30th) it is to be seen that the strike was prepared beforehand by understanding with (persons) abroad as a political demonstration. Among the demands and complaints made by those participating in the hunger-strike, the following can be specified at the present moment:

Bad food. The ration which the prisoners are getting is better and of higher quality than the Red Army ration, and better than that of the workingmen in Moscow.

The prisoners are getting: meat, cereal, bread, tea, sugar and other things. The sugar alone is five pounds a month—an amount undoubtedly larger than that consumed in Moscow among the workingmen. The prisoners are getting also white bread as part of the dietary. The bread is whiter than the mixed rye-wheat (quality), but not the finest. The prisoners demand only the finest.

At the present time, in view of the approaching end of navigation, energetic provisioning is going on. There are already large supplies of fish, flour, and a few days ago, upward of two hundred head of cattle were brought for slaughter.

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Besides this ration, the political prisoners are getting large parcels from outside. During the past season, they received upward of six hundred poods (a pood is about thirty-six English pounds) of different supplies (coffee, tea, sugar, cirgarettes, etc.) and clothing. Demanding a further increase in the ration, the political prisoners at the same time refuse to declare what provisions they have on hand, and start an uproar about searches, which however, are not initiated in any case, and are not allowed. Furthermore, the political prisoners have the possibility of cultivating kitchen gardens and occupying themselves with fishing inside the barbed wire (enclosure). However, they refuse to do this, demanding the right to go outside the barbed wire fences.

The right to move from one place to another. There are on the Solovki two camps, one of them is situated on a separate island. The camps are surrounded by barbed wire, leaving for the prisoners a large space for diverse purposes. Last year, as an experiment, permission was given the prisoners freely to spend their time gathering berries on the whole island, under supervision. In small groups, accompanied by a warden, the political prisoners left the wire (enclosure). But instead of gathering berries, they systematically scattered in the forests, and there was no possibility either of following them, or even of gathering them together at night to go home. The picking of berries was only a part of the struggle against the barbed wire fences, in order to gain unlimited liberty to walk about on the island. As a consequence, the free leaving of the enclosure was stopped, and the present demands to fish, etc., are only an attempt to renew the experiment, but on a larger scale. As has been already stated above, inside the barbed wire fences there are opportunities enough for cultivating kitchen gardens, fishing and walking. It is true that inside the enclosures fishing in a boat (canoe) is forbidden, and this method of fishing is not permissible. However, the administration is ready to give certain liberties in this regard if the prisoners will give a mutual obligation that outside the wire they will not scatter, and, in general, will not escape from the island. This obligation, however, the prisoners refused to give and still refuse to give. It is interesting to note that the political prisoners demand not only to go outside the wire enclosure, but demand as well the right to remain on the island all night long and to have the electric light on all night.

Right to meet relatives. (Vistors from outside). The political prisoners demand the renewal of the regime with regard to meeting relatives that existed in 1923. In that year the relatives and friends of the political prisoners were allowed to come and spend with the prisoners in the same buildings a whole week. The visitors, however, brought presents for the prisoners, and undoubtedly took out, if not

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in their pockets, then in their sleeves, collars, etc., information for abroad. When attempts were made to search them, they protested loudly and threateningly. This regime, therefore, was found impractical, and besides required an increase of expenditures in running (the camps), furniture, laundry, and wardens. In view of these facts, this regime was stopped, and visitors are now put in a special building, separate from the prisoners, and can see them every day, one hour a day, during seven days.

Insufficiency of medical attendance. The camps have seven men in the medical personnel. Besides this, there are their own physicians among the prisoners. The amount of medicaments (recently a shipment of 2,000 roubles worth was brought up) is greater than the normes usually met with in the workers' villages, and even in some Uezd towns (county capitals). But the prisoners demand rare and expensive patent preparations, which are not even found in the "insurance bureaus. Many of the prisoners, who, being free, could easily bear toothache and teeth troubles, demand at present gold caps and gold bridges.

In general, in the great mass, the prisoners are a typical intelligentsia, which refuses all work in spite of the fact that physical exercise is the basis of health in the northern climates. The yards, for instance, are unclean to the highest degree. When, now, asked how they can bear to live in such unsanitary conditions, the prisoners answered that they don't want to work.

The commission of Katanian and Krassikov, which recently was there, found that their pretentions were unfounded, and explained the demonstration exclusively by its political motives.

*AN OPEN LETTER FROM GOTZ TO EDDO FIMMEN
(1925)

On January 15, 1925 there appeared in the "Izvestia" an article signed by D. Svertchkov in which your impressions of your trip to Soviet Russia were given.

When the former Secretary of the Amsterdam International, an old fighter in the ranks of the trades union movement of Holland, follows such a path, I consider it my duty towards those workingmen who perhaps trust you, to declare that you are either a victim of a cynical fraud on the part of the Bolshevist press, or the role of an advocate of the Bolshevist power which you have assumed has carried you beyond the limits of truth,—and to such an extent that in your

*Fimmen has since issued a statement to the effect that the article in the "Izvestia" was not in accordance with the facts, insofar as its statements with regard to him or attributed to him were concerned, and that he never stated he had seen Gotz and that he had written to the editor of "Izvestia" to that effect.

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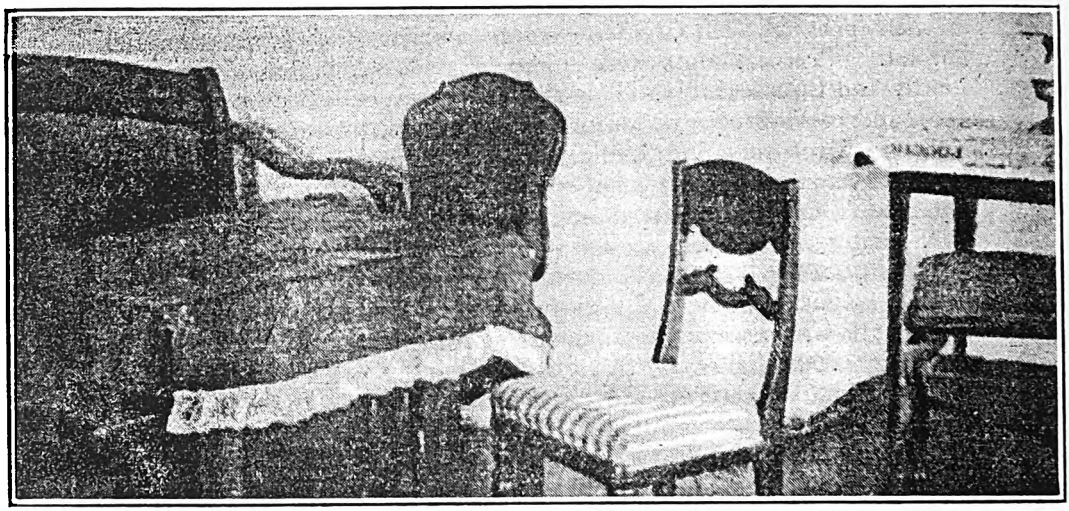

Wohnzimmer fur die Gefangenen von Solowetzk.

The illustration reproduced above is page three of the "Sonderbeilage" of the "Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz", Number 37, Wien, September 13, 1924, Deutsche Ausgabe, Nur als Manuscript gedruckt. (Separate Issue of the International Press Correspondence, Number 37, Vienna, Sept. 13, 1924.)

It is from the official communist issue of Vienna, known in abbreviation as the "Imprecor"; that is, the International Press Correspondence.

The document of which one page is reproduced here, consists of four pages, being a "Sonderausgabe" (separate issue). It contains six photographic reproductions of the Solovetz prison. It speaks of the Solovetz as "Gefangnissort der Russischen politischen Gefangenen" (Prison of Russian political prisoners).

The investigator who procured this document and sent it to the editor, states that it has been reproduced in various communist publications in Germany and France to illustrate how well the politicals in Solovetz are treated

He points out that Photo No. 4 on page three (reproduced above), marked "Wohnzimmer fur die Gefangene von Solowetzk" (living rooms of the prisoners in Solovetz) quite clearly shows on the table at the right the newspaper "Rossia". That newspaper, he states, suspended publication before the war, and any one familiar with the Russian situation (he claims) would know that it would be impossible for a copy of that paper to be now on any table in Russia, much less the Solovetz Islands. All such papers he maintains have long ago been confiscated by the Government, destroyed, put in libraries, and placed on the prohibited list, or simply used as fuel. He concludes that the picture must have been taken before the war, during the Czarist regime. He further states that he has been unable to secure anothr copy of this document, which seems to have been withdrawn from general circulation.

In view of the conflict of evidence between the politicals on the Solovetz Islands and the authorities, as to the way the politicals are being treated, this document, interpreted in this manner by a reliable investigator, needs explanation from the Soviet side.

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assertions, or in those which are ascribed to you, there is not a single word of truth.

You say:

> "I received permission to freely visit the prisons and all detention places. First of all I wanted to see Gotz. I was told: 'He is not here.' This surprised me. 'How is that? Where is he?' The reply was: 'He is among his relatives, in one of the suburban villas of Moscow.' 'What kind of a villa?' 'He is at a villa for recuperation.'
>
> "I took the address and went out to the villa. I saw Gotz. He was actually at liberty, out in the fresh air, surrounded by the care of his relatives."

And in a rather disappointed tone you add:

> "And we, we had thought that the poor fellow was encased in a stone dungeon, that he was slowly dying a victim of your terrible persecution.
>
> "Why are you silent? Why don't you publish these facts? Why don't you expose the lies spread about you?"

I agree with you that one should not be silent when lies are spread, and I therefore declare:

1. *It is not true that you visited me. All that you have to say about it is invented from the first to the last word.* I know that foreigners regard my country as a land of fantastic tales where the most impossible, the most marvelous things can happen.

Catherine the Great was in her day shown the famous Potemkin villages in the steppes. Purcell, on the day following the almost wholesale extermination of the Georgian intelligentsia, was shown the happy Georgian people, peacefully dancing to the strains of music (zurnal). He was shown workingmen's villages which excelled the English cottages. And you, Citizen Fimmen, had the occasion to meet a fraudulent Gotz, a living, happy, testimony of Bolshevist humanity.

2. *It is not true that I lived with my relatives in a Suburban villa of Moscow.*

In the course of my five years in Bolshevist prisons I was never at liberty once. There is a tiny grain of truth, however, in your story. After our trial, we were transferred to the Inner Prison of the "G. P. U." where we were kept in dark cells—without air, the windows boarded up, without newspapers, without books. Long confinement in such oppressive conditions so shattered the health of my comrades that the administration itself was compelled to put them temporarily in better sanitary conditions. For this purpose we were taken in turn for two weeks to a Soviet farm, belonging to the "G. P. U.", where a detention house was especially erected and where previous to us the members of the Central Committee of the Party of Left Socialist-

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Revolutionists, Spiridonova, Izmailovitch, Mayorov, were kept under strict surveillance. Here, within the space of about an acre, surrounded by barbed wire, we were permitted to remain in the open air until 9 o'clock in the evening, guarded by jailers who followed in our foosteps. Our families had been permitted to live with us, under conditicns that they voluntarily become prisoners.

This country idyll lasted two weeks for each of us, after which we were placed in the Butirky Prison where many of us had spent long years under the Czarist regime.

In the course of two and a half years our group had gone through eighteen hunger-strikes—joint and individual—of a total duration of 366 days. And as recently as December, 1924, one of our comrades, a veteran revolutionist, Sergei Morozov, who had twice been condemned to penal servitude under the Czarist regime, committed suicide.

I want to call your attention to the following circumstances. After our trial, for seventeen months, we remained under a death sentence—an unheard of period in the annals of justice in any country. I shall add the following facts to this picture. Each member of our group has spent on the average four years in Bolshevist prisons, and altogether, counting the terms served under the Czarist regime, an average of 12 years in prison and exile.

I hope that these facts will somewhat weaken the artificial joy of Citizen Fimmen.

In the person of Purcell, Citizen Fimmen, you have a worthy collaborator.

Purcell actually saw me—not in the columns of the "*Izvestia*" but in real life. It is true he did not find me in a villa with my relatives but in the Butirky Prison. But I readily assume that Purcell, who has just passed through the honeymoon of his passion for Bolshevism, overflowing with delight over the miracles of Soviet actuality, will not refuse to confirm, supplementing his Arabian Soviet tales which he narrated, that the Butirky Prison—this old and filthy jail of Czarist times—almost resembles a crystal palace. Don Quixote took the ugly and filthy Aldonza to be the beautiful Dulcinea. Why should it be forbidden to Purcell, this last bit of Don Quixotism, to see in the distorted, unorganized, and primitive Russian life the features of a Communist ideal already transformed into reality?

In conclusion, permit me to follow your example and that of Purcell—to digress for a minute from the unsightly reality and to soar into the clouds of utopia. Let us admit for a moment—for a moment only—that Communism is victorious in England or in Holland and that at the head of these states are Pollitt and Weintraub. I do not doubt that in spite of your present "revolutionary declaration", you would, once having struck the reality of a Communist dictatorship, turn away from it and raise against it the banner of revolt. And only

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then would you understand why to the sense of anger and hatred which the Communist Dictatorship provokes in us, there is added a sense of contemptuous pity for all the childish declarations of all the defenders of Bolshevism—declarations which are fundamentally contradictory and hopelessly false. They are in ecstasy with the Bolshevist reality, while at the same time they reject this reality which they eulogize as soon as its application in their own country is discussed. And only then you would really understand that unworthy role which you have been made to play in the revolutionary movement.

Your name and your person are used to cover up the worst kind of violence and despotism. Your authority is exploited as a shield against the workmen and the peasants, against all those toilers who did not bow their heads before triumphant force and who continue to struggle heroically in the name of democracy and socialism.

In your conversation with Svertchkov you, among other things, mentioned that the Second International had asked you to intervene in favor of the Georgian people in the struggle waged against them by the Soviet power, and that you proudly replied:

"You are cruelly mistaken taking me for a lackey."

But why did you then put on so willingly the uniform of a Kremlin lackey?

A. GOTZ.

Butirky Prison, February 1, 1925.

NOTE. Another angle on the trustworthiness of official statements is found in a "Declaration by the Foreign Bureau for the Creation of a Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation", in which are flatly contradicted statements contained in an interview given out by Chicherin in the year 1922 in which he said: "There is not a single Anarchist in Russia persecuted or imprisoned for his ideas." The Declaration then goes on to enumerate the names of about one hundred or more Anarchists imprisoned or persecuted for ideas. This document has been omitted both because of its length and because the list it gives dates back to the year 1922, and is therefore no longer accurate.

In this connection the description published in the spring of 1921 by the Moscow "Pravda" of the ideal conditions in the Butirky jail, should be recalled. This description antedated by about two weeks the terrible pogrom of politicals that took place in that jail. (See documents in Part II on the "Butirky Beating" and the statement by the Political Red Cross in Part IV.)

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Part IV

Documents Concerning Civil Liberties and Administration of Justice and Prisons

These documents are of varied character but have a certain unity in that, in addition to other matters, they all deal with allied subjects. Material as to civil rights, administration of justice and prisons is contained also in other documents printed in other parts of the book.

WE HAVE TO PULL OURSELVES UP*

(November, 1924)

....On the other hand, the existing bureaucracy in matters of prisoners' examinations is exceedingly uneconomic in its attitude towards measures of prophylaxy which take the form of preliminary deprivation of freedom.

"Who knows when the trial will take place—let him sit meanwhile"—this is the inevitable line taken when the officials of the examining staff see no direct results of their labors....

Preliminary imprisonment is too widely used and is, often, not permissible for too long a period.

The procuratorship of the Republic is working out, at present, data about those who are under examination and who are locked up for over 2 months, which is the normal limit fixed by the law. The figures are from October 1.

Alas! Even an approximate calculation has shown that these normal limits are very rarely normal. We have no less than 4,000 men—under date of October 1—who are in preliminary detention for over 2 months. It is true that in a number of cases there is a legal prolongation of the fixed limit, but in any case the fact of appalling bureaucracy is incontrovertible.

Cases of arrested persons awaiting 1 year and longer for their trial have not yet disappeared, although they are becoming rarer. There are individual cases of even longer detention. Thus, Kiev dossier

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From the "Komunist" (Official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine), Kharkoff, No. 271/1461, November 26, 1924.

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No. 1 contains, under date of October 1, two prisoners who have been in preliminary detention for 2½ years; Odessa has one case of preliminary detention for a period of 2 years and 3 months. We must fight energetically against such abuses.

M. REICHEL.

PROTEST BY THE NON-PARTISAN POLITICAL RED CROSS* (1921)

The Political Red Cross considers it its duty to draw the attention of the Presidium of the ..... to the systematic aggravation which has lately been noticed in the conditions of the political prisoners. There is a revival, in the matter of imprisonment, of the practice which we had observed in the early days of acute civil war on the territory of Soviet Russia,—a time when the authorities did not yet possess a well-organized examining machinery, when accommodation suitable for imprisonment was lacking, when, in a word, there was no three years' experience in organization.

The abuses which had taken place in the nervous atmosphere of 1918 were, at that time, emphatically condemned by the representatives of the Government: a great deal was spoken and written about these abuses in the columns of the press, in Government Commissions and in Party circles. And now. these misdeeds, which seemed to have gone into oblivion, are again being repeated in every day practice.

The immediate cause of the present statement is an event† which clearly illustrates our point. We speak of the unexpected removal of 255 (the figures are official) Socialists and Anarchists from the Butirky prison on the night of the 25th of April. The official reason for this exceptional occurrence in modern prison history, as told to the Red Cross, was the necessity of removing from prison restless elements who, by their accumulation, by their spirit of unity and solidarity, have broken down the normal run of prison life. We cannot go into criticism of these administrative reasons, but cannot refrain from drawing the attention of the Presidium to the contradictions contained in these official reasons as against the criticism of the regime which had come to stay during the last months in the Butirky Prison, given in the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party ("Pravda," No. 77, April 10, 1921) by the old party worker, N. L. Meshtsheryakoff, who, in his own words, had "often and for a lengthy period at times" been locked up under the Tzarist regime. *This article describes prison life in Soviet Russia as observed by his visiting personally the Butirky Prison. N. L. Meshtsheryakoff notes with*

* Madame Peshkov's (formerly Madame Gorky), organiztion. Vera Figner was a member of this group, which is non-partisan and legal.

† See documents on this subject, the Butirky Beating, in Part II.

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great sympathy and approval the fact of the doors of the cells being open; or that the commandant, when entering the cell, would first knock at the door.. He speaks with satisfaction of the polite behavior of the administration, of newspapers, books and writing materials, sent from the outside, being placed at the disposal of the prisoners; of the long walks; of the ennobling influence of intercourse between men and women, etc., etc. This new prison regime received, as it were, official sanction in one of the notes of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs addressed to the Latvian Government. And it is just after the publication of this article in the "Pravda" that this new and more normal regime is evidently being now considered as violating the old prison rules of the traditional prison routine already outlived by present-day conditions. We now have before us this fact: men, imprisoned for political reasons, are removed in the dark of night, without any warning and by brute force, from prison; and for over a fortnight, neither the Red Cross nor the relatives are able to find out where the prisoners have been taken to. Let it be but an answer to the "abuses" and to the resistance of the prisoners. Could it have been otherwise in an atmosphere of nervous tension, under the unexpected night visitation, armed men breaking into cells, getting hold of sleeping and half-dressed men and women, and dragging them out of prison no one knows where to? The fact is the more important that it is not any more an exception.

Wholesale deportations, unexpected—without any warning and without any pretext whatever—had taken place before. Thus, on October 19, 1920 a few hundred men were removed from Moscow prisons to the North and to Ekaterinburg. The prisoners were told that they would be sent off late in the evening; at one A. M. they were all bundled into the train. They left as they were, penniless, without warm clothes, not even having had the opportunity of notifying their relatives of their transfer. They obtained very little food during their long journey. Ekaterinburg had refused, for three days, to accept them owing to lack of accommodation.

It was hoped that the time had gone by for the repetition of such acts. Yet, this took place under considerably worse conditions than six months ago; many were sent off without clothes; many were ill-treated. All this could be substantiated by the depositions of the victims, if the Presidium give the necessary attention to what had happened.

The secrecy with which the removal of the Butirky prisoners was carried out has become an everyday occurrence; the prisoners are not notified previously of their transfer from one prison to another, or of their banishment to other cities. Thus, neither the Red Cross nor the relatives have any opportunity of rendering a little easier the heavy conditions of the transferred.

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Information to relatives about prisoners is now, generally, refused, by the *Vetcheka* authorities. This refusal of information cannot be laid at the doors of imperfection of clerical staff. It is now forbidden, by order of the *Vetcheka*, for examining magistrates and agents to give information not only to individuals but also to institutions. Heads of Departments alone have power to give information —but these are usually unapproachable. The Information Bureau of the Moscow *Vechetka* (Little Lubyanka, 7) which had been giving information about persons arrested by the *Tcheka*, now refuses to give out any information. The only means of finding out the whereabouts of a prisoner arrested by the *Vetcheka* is by attempting to send that person a parcel of food through Lubyanka, 2: having waited for a whole day in a queue, the sender of the parcel would often receive the reply that the parcel could not be accepted for the person for which it is intended, as he is not in the *Vetcheka*, although the prisoner is kept in the Inner Prison of the *Vetcheka*, while they have not had time to register his name. As to prisoners considered to be in charge of the Commandant, they are not allowed to receive food from outside. Relatives remain in such a state of complete ignorance as to the whereabouts of prisoners for weeks: thus relatives of persons arrested on April 14-15 by order of the Secret Department—there were dozens of them—were unable, for three weeks, to send food or clothes to their arrested relatives, and were even unable to find out where they were being kept.

All these conditions gain particular importance owing to the fact that the regime introduced in the Inner Prison of the *Vetcheka* might spread over to the other prisons.

The official rules of this Inner Prison prohibit the reading not only of newspapers, but of books, too; smoking is also prohibited (this rule is, by the way, totally ignored); innocent games such as chess are also prohibited. The prisoners are, thus, condemned to complete inactivity . Such conditions of imprisonment must act deterioratingly on the morale of the inmates; yet, men are kept in this prison for weeks, often months. It is impossible not to note the excessive over-population of the cells, utterly out of proportion to the volume of the room. Many of the inmates are compelled to sleep on the bare floor. The cells are almost unventilated, owing to the peculiar construction of the window frames which prevent the opening even of the little bull's-eye window. It is under these conditions that prisoners are kept without pillows (these cannot, at present, be sent from the outside), without underclothing, without soap—while parcels of goods and food are allowed but once or twice a week. The transmission of parcels is so badly organized that one can stand a whole day in huge queues and not have the opportunity of handing over the parcel. But the most cruel of the rules of the Inner Prison of the *Vetcheka* is the one allowing but twice a day the use of the lavatory;

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besides, until recently, many of the cells possessed no chamber pots. The use of the lavatory for a third time is permitted as an exception and the granting of that privilege depends entirely upon the wardens. Naturally, such a state of things is considered by the prisoners as a kind of physical torture. The behavior of the lower officials is, according to the prisoners, of the coarsest and is often accompanied by filthy swearwords; they usually address the prisoners with "thou,"* The Order of the Presidium of the *Vetcheka* of September 9, 1920 about the necessity of being polite to prisoners is never carried out.

All this creates a sombre frame of mind inside the prison. It is brought about by small things which could be easily remedied; yet they are hard to bear by the inmates. By a timely anticipation of such frictions by the authorities, these irregularities might have been easily removed. Yet, the representatives of the Political Red Cross who would have considered it their duty to do so, are not allowed to visit the Inner Prison of the *Vetcheka*. As to other prisons, and especially with regard to prisoners under the control of the *Vetcheka*, visits are allowed in exceptional cases. The Political Red Cross had, more than once, drawn the attention of the *Vetcheka* to this.

Further, it is necessary to mention the brutal way in which the widely used system of ambushes is being carried out: crowds of people, having no relation whatever to politics, are trapped in these snares, and are often kept in prison for lengthy periods. This is due to the fact that there are no well-established rules of speedy examination of causes of arrest and of the degree of guilt of persons caught in ambushes. We could relate a series of cases where those arrested in ambushes had been kept for over a month without their cases having been taken up for examination. Generally speaking, the Order of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets of February, 1919, which enjoins the examining magistrates of the *Vetcheka* to close the preliminary examination of the prisoners within a month, is never carried out.

As a flagrant example of this, we have the case of so-called espionage.†

The most varied cases belong to this category: it refers to persons coming from abroad with regular permits and visa'd documents; to local inhabitants—sometimes illiterate peasants—who had crossed the border within the war-zone with a view of returning to their village; or to foreigners who had spent almost all their lives in Moscow and who, for some reason or other, had become suspects; to a photographer

*Under the Tzarist regime politcals had a right to be addressed by the more respectful "You".

†Dr. Harry F. Ward who went to Russia in the fall of 1924, to investigate the question of civil liberties in Russia, reports that prosecution for espionage was still common. He mentions the crime of economic espionage, and even a case that came under his observation of "unconscious economic espionage". "The Nation", March 7, 1925.

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of a Mission who had taken a group of employeees of the Mission without having previously asked the perm'ssion to do so; or simply to persons who happened to have telephoned to a foreign Mission, who had visited a Mission for the purpose of handing or receiving a letter, or who had received a parcel from abroad, etc., etc. There is an infinite number of such cases pending at present. Although the reasons given for being accused of spying are most varied, there is one common feature to all these cases—they drag on for weeks, often for months.

The rapid survey which we have drawn here gives but a pale representation of what is actually taking place. We express once more the hope that the Presidium of the ———— will respond to our call. Nothing but the consciousness of the necessity of fulfilling our duty dictates this appeal of our which we are sending simultaneously to the Presidium of the *Vetcheka* and to that of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

President of the Council (VERA FIGNER)
Chairman of Committee (MURAVIEV)
Secretary

RULES FOR PRISONERS OF THE INNER PRISON OF THE VETCHEKA*

(The original bears the inscription: *I assent*—Administrative Chief of the Vetcheka, *G. Yagoda.*)

1. The prisoners are emphatically forbidden to communicate with each other by any means whatsoever.
2. Conversation in cells must be in a low voice.
3. No inscriptions to be made on windows or doors.
4. The shutter closing the bull's eye opening in the door must not be opened.
5. The utensils used for food must be delivered immediately after meals.
6. The cells must be swept daily. It is to be washed when necessary.
7. Rising time must not be later than 7.30 A. M. Bedtime—not later than 10 P. M.
8. When desiring to go to the lavatory, knock gently at the door. Keep lavatories clean.
9. While in the corridor, no questions are to be put to anyone. It is asked, while passing along the corridor, not to make any noise. Talking in the corridor is strictly prohibited.

* The prison where the "G. P. U." (successor to the Tcheka) usually keeps the politicals while their cases are under investigation.

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10. Reading of books and newspapers, walks, etc., are, as a rule, prohibited.

11. Games, such as cards, draughts, etc., are strictly prohibited. So is anything which breaks silence and order.

12. Smoking is, as a rule, prohibited, but can be allowed—in each case with the knowledge of the Governor of the Prison.

13. The following items can be kept by the prisoners: materials for prayers, authorized food provisions, comb, pocket looking-glass, soap, tooth-powder, needles, thread, brush, tea-kettle, glass or cup, medicines or disinfectants authorized by the Doctor, pillow, bed-clothes and clothing.

14. It is strictly forbidden to spit and to throw dirt on the floor. The cleaning of the cells is to be done in turn by the inmates.

15. When a prisoner complains of ill-health, he is examined by the prison doctor. The wish to be so examined must be notified to the Governor of the Prison.

16. Letters to relatives are allowed not more than once a week, and are to be handed on Saturdays to the Governor of the Prison, when the latter is doing his round.

17. The prisoner must write legibly on the top of each letter his name and surname, and indicate the name, surname and address of the person to whom the letter is to be forwarded.

18. Business statements, complaints, etc., whether in writing or verbally, are accepted daily by the Governor of the Prison, when doing his round.

Note: When a prisoner has to make an urgent declaration before the Governor's visit, he hands this statement to the Assistant Governor of the Prison through the warden.

19. Writing paper is handed out in a specified quantity by the Governor of the Prison. Spoiled sheets are returned to the prisoners.

20. Food parcels for prisoners are accepted not more than once a week on a determined day.

21. With each parcel, the sender of it must attach a note containing the name and surname of the prisoner to whom the parcel is sent, a detailed list of all the items contained in the parcel, the time when the parcel is handed over, and the signature of the sender. The note is transmitted to the prisoner who signs it as having received the goods.

22. No other notes or letters (besides the above) are permitted during the transmission of parcels.

23. Anyone caught in the act of attempting to communicate with the prisoners during the transmission of parcels, is liable to prosecution. Prisoners caught in the act of trying to communicate with the outside world will be deprived of the right to receive food parcels.

24. The lawful demands of the wardens must be strictly carried out.

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25. Any infringement of the present regulations will lead to the strict isolation of the guilty, to their transfer to worse conditions or to their imprisonment in a cellar.

The Governor of the Prison.

HUNGER-STRIKE FOR BETTER CONDITIONS OF EXILE*
(1923)

In September and October of last year we were arrested together with scores of other comrades during the "G. P. U." campaign aimed at wrecking the Charkov organization of the Social-Democrats. After a more or less short period, five of us were released, *as suffering from grave and chronic maladies*, under a written pledge of mutual security and of our remaining in the city. The five were: Raphael Grigoriev, A. Kolmskov, and I. Resul, all suffering from tuberculosis; V. Tcherkess, afflicted with heart-disease and pneumonia contracted in prison; and I. Voronitzyn, who was losing his eyesight. One of the five, Raphael Grigoriev, was arrested while in the hospital of the Charkov Tubercular Institute and was released from prison after the official interference of the Assistant Procurator of the Ukrainian Republic, Maker. Two of the others, who are now in prison, N. Titensky and A. Fomitchev, were released at the moment the case was about closed and the remaining prisoners about to be exiled to Turkestan.

On the night of April 3 to 4, of this year, all of the undersigned were again arrested on an order of the "G. P. U." and one of the agents of the "G. P. U." announced to us the following sentence passed by a special council of the Commissariat of the Interior: "Imprisonment for three years in the Archangelsk Concentration Camp."

The passing administratively of a sentence which condemns most of us to certain perdition has firmly convinced us that the Government has decided to exterminate us physically, but at the same time lacks the courage to assume the responsibility for it openly.

We hereby inform you that on April 4 we declared a hunger-strike which we announced in the corresponding statements to the Chief of the "G. P. U.," Mantzev, and the President of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, Petrovsky.

We address ourselves to you as to the representative of Justice, inviting you to investigate our cases and if any element of crime be found in them, to put us all on trial. We know but too well the severity of the punishment fixed by the existing criminal code, especially with regard to so-called counter-revolutionary crimes, but we

* This communication was addressed to Skrypnik, the Procurator of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and a signed duplicate to the chief of the "G. P. U.", Mantzev.

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prefer the most severe sentence passed by an open court trial to the lightest administrative punishment.

If, however, there are no data justifying you to place us on trial and the Government can fight us only by means of extra-judicial measures, i.e., by means essentially opposed to the law, then we have the right to demand from you guarantees safeguarding our lives, our health, and a minimum of civilized life. We consider it necessary to communicate to you the conditions on which we will end the hunger-strike:

I. It will be immediately suspended if the administrative sentence indicated should be annulled and we should be officially informed that our case is to be tried in court.

II. The acceptance of the administrative, repressive sentence passed on us we make subject to the following conditions:

1. A medical examination to ascertain whether our health permits a long trip and living in a climatic zone worse than that of Charkov.

2. The granting to those who desire it the right to go abroad and the leaving us free in Charkov until we secure the proper visas.

3. None of the sick among us should be confined in prison or in a concentration camp.

4. Those of us found by the medical examiners to be unwell should be exiled to places not requiring a long trip, climatically not inferior to the Charkov zone, and to points where the systematic assistance of expert physicians can be had.

5. The trip to exile, together with our families, should be made at the expense of the state, without taking the ordinary prison-to-prison route. (*Etape.—Ed.*)

6. The granting us of a month's time to settle our affairs.

7. The immediate release of all of us upon our mutual pledges or upon the pledge of our representative for all.

This is the minimum of our demands. We realize but too well that every day of the hunger-strike brings the majority of us nearer to the fatal end.

But we also take into consideration the fact that the notorious Archangelsk concentration camps on the White Sea threaten us with inevitable ruin.

We prefer without hesitation death from a hunger-strike in prison in the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic to slow extinction in a concentration camp modestly hidden away in a pernicious, dark corner.

We have warned you, Mr. Procurator, of the choice we have made and the decision we firmly adopted. We have also given this warning to the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and to the "G. P. U,." and all responsibility before the Russian and

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International proletariat for our lives, health and the fate of our families will fall with all its weight on the Soviet Government.
Charkov, April 5, 1923

(*Signatures*): I. VORONITZYN
RAPHAEL GRIGORIEV
A. KOLMAKOV
I. RESUL
N. TITENSKY
A. FOMITCHEV
V. TCHERKESS

RIGHT TO EXILE ADMINISTRATIVELY*
(1922)

Citizen Kursky! In April of this year, after each of us had spent from 8 to 14 months in prison, we were indicted for belonging to the Socialist-Revolutionist Party and for being active in it. In May we were sentenced by the "G. P. U." to administrative exile for two years to the remote parts of Russia.

We refused to accept this sentence, demanding, on the basis of the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of February 6, of this year, either freedom or an open trial of the charges made against us.

You know as well as we that Article 8 of the decree of the Central Executive Committee of February 6, categorically declares that "from now on all cases of offences against the Soviet regime or any violation of the laws of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic are subject exclusively to judicial procedure by the revolutionary tribunals or the people's courts, according to their character." (No. 30 of the "Izvestia" of February 8, 1922.) This decree, having been passed by the highest legislative organ of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, is a law, the observance of which, it would seem, should first of all be the duty of the officials of the Soviet Republic.

Nevertheless, the "G. P. U.," which has taken the place of the abolished *Tcheka*, almost from the first day of its existence, began, without any participation of the judicial organs, to mete out punishment to the political opponents of the existing government—the Socialists and Anarchists—sending them by the score and the hundred into administrative exile.

In passing its sentences, the "G. P. U." paid so little attention to the decree of the Central Executive Committee of February 6 that, to

* On the opposite page is a facsibile of this letter. In the original Russian it is entitled, "An Open Letter to the People's Commissar of Justice of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, Citizen Kursky." This document is particularly noteworthy because of the four signers, two—Katchorovsky and Bilma-Pasternak—subsequently lost their lives in the tragedy of December 19, 1923, on Solovetz Islands. (See Part III).

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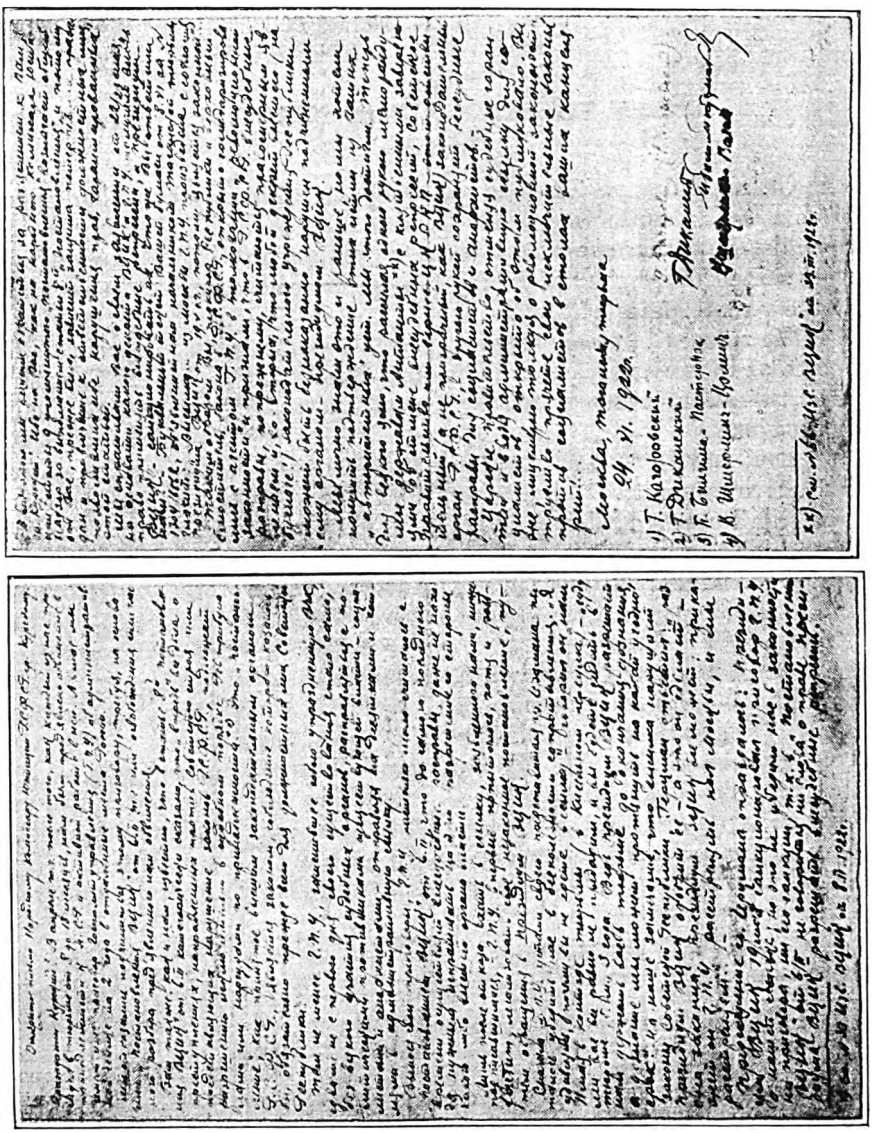
the very last, it meted out its punishments without open trial, without even considering it necessary to obtain the approval of any of the highest organs of the Government.

Only after we, the undersigned, declared our refusal to go into exile, the "G. P. U.," for the first time, attempted *ex post facto* to legalize its lawless order by applying to the President of the Central Executive Committee.



FACSIMILE OF DOCUMENT: "RIGHT TO EXILE ADMINISTRATIVELY"

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At first the "G. P. U.," through the mouth of its representative, Mr. Gertzman, endeavored to persuade us of the futility of resistance. "I am surprised at your not proceeding into exile," he said to us on May 11, in the office of the prison on Kisselny Alley. "We shall not hand your cases over to the courts, anyway, and you will remain in prison, perhaps for three years longer. The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee permits us to keep you in prison until the conclusion of the investigation, and we can drag out the investigation as long as we please." In reply to our remark, that exile violates the laws of the Soviet Republic, Gertzman said: "Once the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee approves it—and this it will do—it is lawful. The Presidium can do anything. If it orders the ".G P. U." to shoot half of Moscow's population, we shall execute it."

The prediction of Mr. Gertzman came true. On May 19, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee sanctioned the sentence of the "G. P. U." concerning our exile. But this did not convince us of the legality either of the sentence or of the sanction, since there is not a word in the decree of the Central Executive Committee of February 6, about the right of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee to permit repressive measures without trial.†

In view of all this, Citizen Kursky, we decided to appeal to you for an explanation. You, the People's Commissar of Justice, are charged, by Article 9 of the afore-mentioned decree, with general control of the execution of Article 8 of the decree, and, therefore, it is up to you, first of all, to defend the unprotected citizens and to bring to account such officials as permit themselves to violate the rights guaranteed by this article.

We asked you, in our declaration of May 23, 1922, if there was any decree of the Central Executive Committee endowing the "G. P. U." with the right of applying repressive measures without open trial and empowering the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee to sanction such measures. What was your answer? The text of your communication of June 8, No. 1304/6562, announced to us by the chief warden of the Taganka Prison, reads as follows: "The exile . . . from Moscow was ordered by the 'G. P. U.' with the consent of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of May 19, of this year. Therefore it is lawful."

In this manner, you, the Procurator of the Republic, the supreme guardian of the law, openly declared your solidarity with the agent of the "G. P. U." in the interpretation of "revolutionary justice," recognizing, first, that in the Russian Soviet Republic punishment without trial is still considered lawful and, second, that any decree (on paper!) of the highest legislative institution of the Republic can be

†But see decree permitting administrative exile, page 296.

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violated freely by an inferior organ such as the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee.

We personally knew this before, but we wanted to have confirmation of this truth from your "authoritative" mouth. This we have secured. It is now clear to everybody that, while despatching with one hand memoranda to the Entente Powers containing sworn assurances about the abolition of repressive measures without trial (No. 66, "Izvestia" of March 23, 1922), the Soviet Government, or, more correctly, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party—this real (unlike the shadowy Central Executive Committee of the Soviets) legislative organ of the Russian Soviet Republic, continues with the other hand sentencing without trial Socialists and Anarchists.

The Tzar's government, abolishing court trials and introducing the system of administrative exile for Socialists openly published that fact. But you, hypocritically talking about revolutionary justice, in your cowardice keep your extraordinary laws against Socialists concealed in the depths of your offices,

(*Signed*) G. KATCHOROVSKY
G. DIKANSKY
P. BILIMA-PASTERNAK
V. SHMERLIN-VOLIN

Moscow, Taganka Prison,
June 24, 1922.

THE RIGHT OF DEFENCE*

Behind prison bars, we only now have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the stenographic records published by the Executive Committee of the Communist International of the joint session of the executive committees of the three Internationals. On page 54, of the Russian edition of the records, is contained the following assertion of K. Radek: "*It is true, we are barbarians, but our prisoners have the right to choose their own public defenders.*"

Without disputing the first part of this assertion, we consider it necessary to assure you categorically that its second part completely fails to correspond with the facts. And that in our own particular case in which the "Supreme Prosecutor," Krylenko, demanded death sentences, we were not permitted to choose defenders according to our wishes nor to call witnesses on our side or to re-examine in court those dark characters whose "evidence," *signed by nobody*, played a part in the case.

Our case was "tried" by the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal of the Central Executive Committee on April 21, last year, without

* This challenge from a Soviet prison to Karl Radek, the representative of the Communist International at the memorable joint conference of all the Socialist Internationals then in existence, has as far as we know never been taken up at Moscow.

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defence, *without any examination of witnesses*, and the "sentence" is already known to the readers of the "Socialist Vestnik"—5 years of solitary confinement in prison, plus compulsory labor.

(*Signatures*) E. VASSILIEV
PETER PETRENKO
A. LOCKERMAN
P. MELSITOV

Moscow, May 8, 1922.

Sentenced in Connection with the Case of the Donetz Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION*

(November, 1923)

I, a workingman by origin, a former Communist, a volunteer in the Red Army from 1918 to 1922 inclusive, was arrested in the city of Maryupol, the Province of Don, on July 30, 1923, and for four months have been in the prisons of the Union awaiting my fate. I am charged with Articles 57, 61, 66, 70, and 72 of the Criminal Code. The inquiry into my case is finished and the material is in the "G. P. U." in Moscow, under No. 87, of the Archangelsk Section of the "G. P. U." In addition to the evidence and declarations which I submitted to the "G. P. U.," I also sent a statement in the form of a letter to M. I. Kalinin, the President of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on Sept. 13, explaining the substance of the case and asking him to give his attention to this act of violence. Whatever his answer may be, I beg you also to intervene in the case and to see to it that it should be handled according to the law, and if that is impossible, to appeal to the press, pointing out that such a thing should not be permitted, of Communists applying punitive measures to workingmen of differing beliefs.

My case originated as follows: After my discharge from the Red Army in August, 1922, I, as a Communist, entered the service of the Archangelsk Section of the "G. P. U.," holding a minor position until December. Realizing that I, a workingman and soldier of the Revolution (who should strike the enemy in the open) should not be doing Cain's work of strangling the working class, I left the "G. P. U." of my own free will and at the same time I left the Russian Communist Party, which fact I declared in an open letter addressed to the press and to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. It was not published, but according to a note in the paper "Volna," I was thrown out of the Party as an "unfit element." In Archangelsk I spent four more months, until April 20, 1923, serving as a clerk in

* The author of this letter is a typical son of the Russian Revolution. A self-educated workingman, Alexander Novikov assimilated in his own way the ideas of the Revolution. The "Open Letter" which caused his arrest follows.

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the Financial Department, but at the insistent demand of the Central Committee I was discharged by the Commission in charge of the "comb-out" and excluded from the Trade Union, and all the doors to work or a position were shut for me. My protests were only a voice in the desert. On account of these persecutions I went to Maryupol where I lived until my arrest. (My letter was published in the "Socialist Vestnik," in Germany, No. 12, for July, 1923, with an introduction by Dan entitled "Eyes Are Opening".)

During the search in my place, manuscripts were taken away from me which served as the material for the charges against me. They were my personal notes on the questions of the day in Soviet Russia, my impressions during the Revolution and generally my views—all this I had written down for myself, as memoranda for the future. In these, not being limited by the censorship and the severity of the laws, I called things by their real names, i.e., I criticized these actions of the Bolsheviks during the Revolution which I considered opposed to the spirit of the Revolution.

In one of my notes, under the title, "My Reminiscences: Wherein the Soviet Power Is Bad," in a detailed description of facts and my views of them, I wrote that "the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionists which took place in Moscow has been staged and put up at the expense of the 'G. P. U.' for the public opinion of Russia and of foreign countries." I was asked in the "G. P. U." how I could write such a thing and how I knew about it. I replied that I wrote for myself and I would answer for the truth of my writing before my own conscience, as I had no intention of publishing what I had written, and that I was not obliged to give anybody an account of the sources of the truthfulness of my impressions.

This is the basis for the charges made against me in accordance with Articles 61, 66, 70 and 72. In addition, one of the important incriminations is my note-book, which I preserved accidentally, and in which the addresses of the administrative exiles in Archangelsk, the Socialist-Revolutionists and the Social-Democrats, were entered by me for purposes connected with my service in the "G. P. U.," as well as a note to the effect that "Ivanov-Rinov is an agent-provocateur."

As to the purpose of these notes, I replied that I did not know Ivanov-Rinov, but that I had accidentally met him when I entered the service of the Economic Council of the province, as we were candidates for the same job. Whether he is an agent-provocateur or not, I did not know; that I had no interest in it; and that my note was made accidentally. All this forms the charge against me of being connected with and participating in counter-revolutionary organizations and disclosing secrets of state, in accordance with Articles 61, 66 of the Criminal Code.

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I am further accused of conducting anti-Soviet propaganda, while working in the Financial Department, among the employees. What this is based upon, I well know. This is all there is substantially in the indictment in my case, as far as I know. It is no more and no less than revenge for my speaking out openly and the basic cause for it is my "open letter"; but I am not afraid of vengeance. Even as I am pure myself, so I desire all always to be pure and frank, and I would sound the trumpets of Jericho, if I had them, about this injustice, about the violation of the fundamental rights of human liberties and, above all, of thought and personality. I never was a slave and never will be.

I want to proclaim that in a free country where the working class is supposed to be at the helm, where the newspapers brand the bourgeois governments of Europe, for persecuting the workers and the Communist press and for maintaining prisons and jails under a regime of civil liberties, as medieval barbarism, claiming at the same time that these liberties exist in Russia, that here the worker is the master, the bearer of power, free to speak what he will and arrange his destiny as he may please and that he is permitted everything and even encouraged in his thinking (but it is only phrases).

Suddenly, at the same time, this workingman is seized, put in prison, subjected to punishment without a trial and investigation, outside of the law and order. Why? Only because he, as the bearer of his authority, opened his mouth, which he thought the only revolutionary thing to do, and did it honestly and openly, exercising the right of a citizen to argue. You are punished because you think, because you want to set down your views on paper since you are literate enough although not a master of the word, to appear in the press, and you want your notes to serve you as reminiscences for the future.

Where is the logic of it? Is it possible that I will be forbidden to do that, too? And if you have a note-book where you put down whatever you need, so as not to trust your memory, such as addresses and notes, isn't that a part of one's personal life, where the law does not touch you? Whether the entries were made for personal or service purposes, what is the difference? Nobody has any business to pry into my note-book. Clear logic would seem to say all that, but suddenly one breaks into your personal life, your soul, into all that you had devoted your mind to and that is dear to you.

One questions, does such unscrupulousness in violating one's personal rights, especially where there are civil liberties, exist in bourgeois countries? Perhaps the times of Nicholas I can compare with . . . (Obscure). Where, then, are the gains of the Revolution? Why is one kept in prison? And am I then alone ? There are thousands such as I. Unheard of, their voice does not ring out on the pages of the Russian and European press. Nobody is interested in them. At least I open my mouth, but they have not done even that.

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They were always slaves, and now they are beaten by those whose heart is cruel and whose hands are high!

(*Signed*) ALEXANDER MATVEEVITCH NOVIKOV

November 27, 1923
Archangelsk Prison.

DECLARATION OF ALEXANDER M. NOVIKOW

Member of the Russian Communist Party, Membership Card No. 83393

To the Archangelsk Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party:*

I beg you to take up the following matter at your next session. Returning from a trip in connection with my work, I learned of the following outrageous fact from my comrades. On December 25, 1922, in the "Lenin Club", there was a meeting of the Communist group of the Archangelsk Provincial "G. P. U.," at which the elementary regulations about democracy within the Party were violated during the discussion relating to the re-election of the bureau of the Communist group. The list of candidates had been prepared before-hand by the former committee and approved by the Regional Committee. The chairman of the meeting, Maslennikov, submitted the list to the assembly, as it required neither change nor discussion, and the secretary, Comrade Zhelonkin, then and there explained that the list had been sanctioned by the Regional Committee and could not call for any objections—which the representative of the Regional Committee, Ivanov, confirmed. The attempts of individual members to introduce a motion in favor of voting separately for each candidate and of supplementing the list were side-tracked by the chairman. The manner of conducting the meeting was also a gross violation of the rules. When put to a vote, the question "Who is in favor of supplementing the list?" secured 17 votes,—and the question: "Who is in favor of the list in its entirety?" received 13 votes—whereas altogether there were present 46 persons. The rest abstained from voting. When expressions of indignation followed and it was proposed to take a second vote, the chairman announced that since there were present 46 members and only 17 were in favor of supplementing the list, it indicated that the rest were for the list proposed by the committee. This, in spite of the fact that the second question had obtained only 13 favorable votes. There followed a tumultuous scene. The chairman brusquely assumed the rule of administrator, and refused to conduct the meeting. The result: the members are crushed, apathetic, disrupted. In spite of the will of the majority, the people elected to the committee are undesirable comrades, such as Zhelomkin. And the gross violation in the midst of the party of the principles of democracy and of

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one's own initiative and enterprise renders it impossible for a working man and a Revolutionist to carry on his activity. We want to create, ourselves, we are not obedient mannequins who can be turned in any direction. And if under the principles of the dictatorship of the working-class is understood the strangling of individual liberty. of free speech, press and assembly for this class, if even within the party the free emergence of ideas and activity is crushd under the heels of th gendarmes and of persons thinking, "We are the working-class, we are the party, we personify the dictatorship," then I thank you. I do not want such a dictatorship and I will openly fight against it.

I did not fight the Tzarist gendarmes, and in the five years of civil war, in order to raise another gendarme or despot to power,—regardless of the mask he wears, even if it be communist. Let the working-class breathe freely and do according to its wishes and not those of others. The emancipation of the workers is in their own hands.

If this question should not be solved in principle in a positive way, I request that this declaration be published in the newspaper, as my reason for leaving the party. A communist not on paper but in reality cannot permit such conditions.

(*Signed*) A. NOVIKOV.

Without going into the question of democracy within the communist party, as that subject is outside the sphere of this book, but merely to prove that this writer's statement concerning the carrying out of the election is in all likelihood reliable, we quote from a speech by Bucharin delivered during the controversy with Trotzky last year: "If we conducted an investigation and inquired how often our party elections are conducted with the question from the chair 'Who is for?' and 'Who is against?' we should easily discover that in the majority of cases, our elections to the party organizations have become 'elections' in quotation marks, for the voting takes place not only without preliminary discussion, but according to the formula 'Who is against?' And, since to speak against the authorities is a bad business, the matter ends right there. Such is the election of the secretaries of our lower branches.

"If you raise the question of our party meetings, then how does it go here? Election of the praesidium of the meeting. Appears some comrade from the District Committee, presents a list and asks, 'Who is against it?' Nobody is against, and the business is considered finished. With the order of the day, the same procedure—The President asks, 'Who is against?' Nobody is against. The resolution is unanimously adopted. There you have the customary type of situation in our party organiaztions. It goes without saying that this gives rise to an enormous wave of dissatisfaction." (From a speech subsequently quoted by Trotzky. See Stenographic report of the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, page 154.) (The entire citation, inclusive of reference to stenographic report, is from Max Eastman's book "Since Lenin Died".)

DEMAND FOR TRIAL

(1922)

I. To the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive of Soviets.

Copies to: Berlin, "Commission of Nine" set up by decision of the Conference of the three Internationals;—Secretary: Com. Heintz.

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From the imprisoned members of the Soc.-Dem. Labor Youth: L. M. Gurvitch, M. I. Singarevitch, A. S. Kranikfeld, L. S. Lande, S. Rappaport, H. M. Sapiro, D. Y. Falk, L. S. Yakubson.

Declaration

Two months ago we were arrested by order of the "G. P. U." On April 24th we were sentenced to banishment to deserted corners of the Vladimir and Ryazan provinces. The verdict is based upon our would-be "counter-revolutionary activities and agitation."

We assert that no such accusation was ever presented to us during all these two months. Not a single fact was given to us which could in any way confirm such an accusation. Our activities were carried on openly before the entire working youth of Moscow. Ideologically and politically we are affiliated to the Russian Scoial-Democratic Labor Party legally recognized by the All-Russian Central Executive of Soviets.....

We were not tried, in spite of our demand and of the assurance given during our examination. We have been dealt with in a most undignified manner, in our absence, by administrative police methods recalling the sad memories of the Tzarist "Okhrana". They were *afraid* to try us. The governing Party is afraid to meet us not only at working class meetings but also in their own Courts. Had we been tried in public, it would have been indisputably proved even to the modern Bolshevist Court, that our activities were directed towards the defense of the interests of the revolution and of socialism, and that our persecution was not because of the interests of the proletariat, but to the fractional fear of the governing Party which loses its credit among the working masses, and, particularly, among the working youth, and which aspires to hold by brute force its dictatorship over the proletariat, crushing every possibility of free expression of its will.

The governing Party supports at present the slogan of the united international labor front. It attempts to prove that this slogan is not demolished by the Communists. At the same time as the representatives of the Russian Communists sit at the same table in Berlin at the Conference and in the Commission of Nine elected by it, with our elder comrades, with our idealogical and political leaders, we suffer unworthy persecutions, we are exiled without trial on the very eve of the joint international demonstration of Communists and Socialists. This act of gigantic hypocrisy is directly called upon to break up the unity of the international labor front. The Communists demand of the Socialist Parties of Western Europe to defend the Russian revolution, yet by their persecutions against us they interfere with that struggle and harm the Russian revolution.

We are resolutely against this unworthy policy and protest against this police persecution. And we declare that such methods will not kill Social-Democracy. On the contrary, for us, for the laboring

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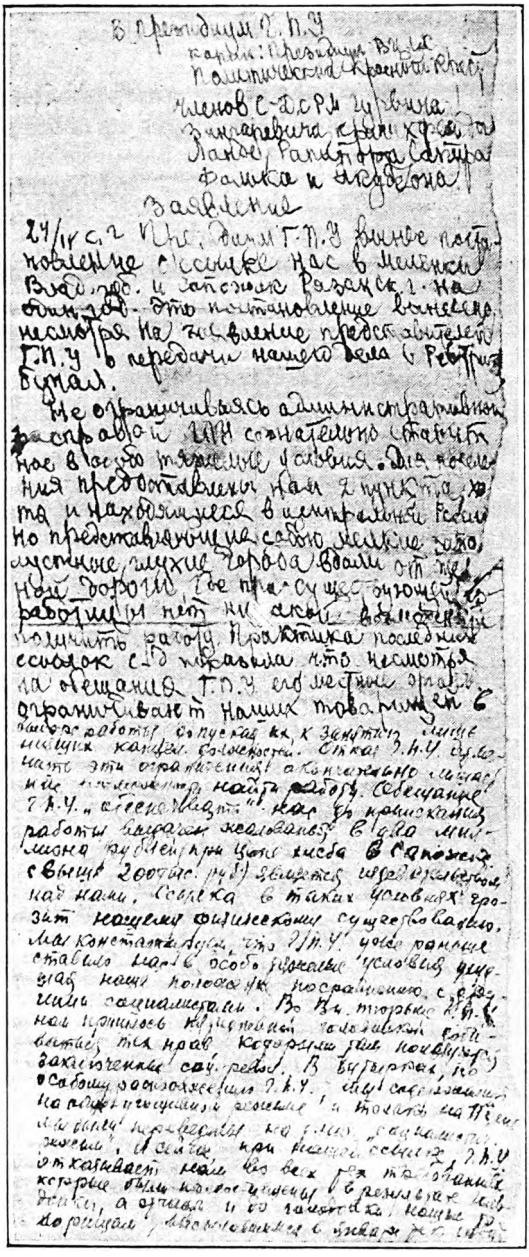

FACSIMILE OF ONE PAGE OF DOCUMENT
"DEMAND FOR TRIAL"

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youth, for the proletariat of Russia, these persecutions are the best proof of the bankruptcy of the governing Party on the one side and of our correct road on the other.

Sweeping away with contempt the accusation formulated against us, we declare that the sentence passed upon us is the best justification of our activities.

(Signatures)

II. To the Presidium of the "G. P. U.":

Copies: To the Presidium of the All-Rissian Central Executive of Soviets; to the Political Cross.

From the members of the Soc.-Dem. Union of Labor Youth: Gurvitch, Singarevitch, Kranikhfeld, Lande, Rappaport, Sapiro, Falk and Yakubson.

Declaration

On April 24 of the current year the Presidium of the "G. P. U." sentenced us to deportation to Melenki, province of Vladimir, and Sapozhok, province of Ryazan, for the period of one year. This sentence was passed in spite of the promise of the "G. P. U." representatives that our case would go to the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Not confining themselves to an administrative exile, the "G. P. U." purposely renders the conditions exceptionally unfavorable for us. Two spots have been fixed for our abodes which, although situated in Central Russia, represent minute distant holes, away from the railway and where, owing to the reigning unemployment, there is no possibility whatever of finding work. The practice of the latest deportations of Social-Democrats showed that, in spite of the "G. P. U." promises, its local departments limit our comrades in the choice of work, allowing them to occupy only secondary clerical posts. The refusal of the "G. P. U." to modify these limitations deprives us definitely of any possibility of finding work. The promise of the "G. P. U." to "secure" means for us until we find work by giving us a monthly subsidy of 2 million roubles (when the price of a pound of bread at Sapozhok is over 200,000 roubles) is derisive. Under such conditions, banishment is a menace to our physical existence.

We take notice of the fact that the "G. P. U." had already placed us in worse conditions than the other Socialists. In the Inner Prison of the "G. P. U." we underwent a 5-day hunger-strike for the sake of obtaining those rights which are enjoyed by the Socialist-Revolutionists kept there. In Butirky prison we were kept, by special order of the "G. P. U.," on the regime of the common-law criminals, and not before the eleventh were we transferred to the so-called "Socialist regime." And now, the "G. P. U.," in connection with our banishment, refuses to acceed to the demands which had been obtained by our comrades banished in January last after hunger-strikes and partly before the hunger-strike. The "G. P. U." separates us most arbitrarily in groups, separately, comrades who are greatly attached to each other,

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thus rendering the struggle for our existence still harder. The banishment takes place straight from prison, without releasing us so that we may arrange our affairs. And lastly, while the "G. P. U.," itself, had deported abroad some of our comrades, it refuses it to two of us (Lande and Sapiro) for whom, owing to the very critical state of their homes, this question has become very acute.

Refusing to go into exile under such conditions, we demand: (1) the right to settle in two central provincial towns on the railway line, outside the famine zone and in which we could find work. The choice of the town to be made by each exile; (2) we are not to be limited, in the place assigned for us, in our rights, particularly in the choice of jobs. We are to receive copies of corresponding orders to the local departments of the "G. P. U.," or any other certificate to that effect; (3) our release before departure so as to be able to arrange our affairs; (4) a subsidy until we find satisfactory work (5) our departure not to be by "etape"; (6) to substitute exile by deportation abroad, and for the same period, for the comrades Lande and Sapiro owing to personal reasons; (7) to defer the banishment of Comrade A. M. Zimin who was released last week in connection with the serious illness of his widowed mother.

Owing to the non-compliance with our demands, we are compelled to resort to the last means at our disposal. We begin our hunger-strike at 5 P. M. today.

Butirky, April 27, 1922. (*Signatures*).

III. To the Presidium of the "G. P. U.":

1922

After we had sent our statement about the beginning of our hunger-strike at 5 P. M. today, we were told by the representative of the Political Red Cross that in a talk with him in connection with our statement, the representative of the "G. P. U.," Gertzman, declared that our demands would immediately be considered by the "G. P. U." As, according to the Red Cross, there was a probability of our demands receiving a satisfactory solution, we agreed to postpone conditionally our hunger-strike until 12 noon, April 28. We take the opportunity of sending a supplementary list of towns to the one already handed to Gertzman, viz: Ryazan, Tver, Kaluga, Vologda. The settlement of the question is to follow upon receipt by us of a written statement of the "G. P. U.," or after final negotiations with its responsible representative.

April 27, 1922. Elder of the Social-Democrats.

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THE TRAEGER CASE

To the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets:

From the Socialists, Administrative exiles from Petrograd: S. I. Ivanoff (Social-Democrat), A. A. Samoyloff (Social-Revolutionist) and V. A. Zarnitzyn.

Statement (1923)

On January 4th* of the current year, the Semipalatinsk Revolutionary Tribunal sentenced the member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party administratively exiled from Petrograd, Nicholas Ivanovitch Traeger, to 5 years imprisonment under strict isolation, in accordance with Section 70, 119 and 120 of the Criminal Code.

The circumstances of the case are the following: On January 1st of the current year, an ecclesiastical debate was held under the Chairmanship of the exile from Petrograd's ex-member of the Russian Socialist-Democratic Labor Party, A. A. Issayev, who was—according to the information in our possession—being proposed as Chairman of the City Soviet. Having considered the action of Citizen Issayev as disgracing the name of the Socialist-Democratic Party, Comrade Traeger,† as member of that Party, proposed to Issayev at the opening of the debate to forego the Chair or to declare there and then that he was no more a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. Without denying the fact of his being nominated Chairman of the City Soviet, Citizen Issayev refused to make the declaration as proposed to him by Traeger, while stating that he did not find it necessary to leave the Chair of the debate. All this induced Traeger to take the floor and, having explained the inadmissibility of Issayev occupying the Chair, felt compelled to develop the standpoint of his Party upon the question of the struggle against religious convictions of the masses and the incompatability of the methods of this struggle with those resorted to by Communists.

Comrade Traeger was arrested during his speech and tried afterwards. The trial took on immediately, upon the reading of the Act of Accusation, the character of a trial of the Russian Socialist-Democratic Labor Party.

We consider this trial as being a revenge of the Communist Party whose representatives, in this case, are the judges, against their political opponents. We protest against the sentence passed on Comrade Traeger, who is consumptive, and for whom a 5 years' imprisonment is equivalent to a sentence of death.

We protest against the fact that, while the Communist Party appeals, in the Western countries, to all the Socialist Parties in favor of a united front in the struggle against reaction, and the Communist

*Feb. ?—Ed.

†Traeger was in Semipalatinsk as an exile.

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International of Young People appeals towards unity with the Socialist Youth of Western Europe, the Russian Communist Party condemns Socialists and members of that same Union of Young People which is affiliated to the Vienna International.

We protest against the accomplished act of revenge.

Semipalatinsk, Feb. 12, 1923.

V. ZARNITZYN
S. IVANOFF
A. SAMOYLOFF

Statement (by Traeger)
(1923)

To the Presidium of the Semipalatinsk Provincial Revolutionary Tribunal:

A fortnight ago I forwarded to you a reasoned statement about my transfer to the Odessa provincial prison to serve there my term of imprisonment.

In that statement, as well as in private conversation with the representative of the Revolutionary Tribunal, I fully enumerated all the reasons which had induced me to insist upon that transfer.

I have not received so far any reply to my application.

Suffering for the last two years from tuberculosis of the second degree which is, at present, progressing, the question of my transfer acquires a first rate importance.

I was dismissed from my employ upon my arrest; I have no other means of existence; my wife is, materially, in a hopeless condition and the state of my health grows worse every day.

Taking these reasons into consideration, I am compelled to insist most categorically upon the following demands:

1. To be transferred the very next week to the Odessa prison.
2. To be sent by direct train, without having to stop on the way in any prison or house of detention.
3. To allow my wife to accompany me.

If no *affirmative* reply will reach me by the 24th inst., I will declare, for the reasons above enumerated, a hunger-strike. I see no other way of fighting for the demands I am putting forward.

Feb. 21, 1923. N. TRAEGER.

(The above was written from the Semipalatinsk Concentration Camp. After a 5-day hunger strike, Traeger was removed to the prison hospital and later, via Moscow, to the Pertominsk Camp (See Part III, Northern Camps. —Ed.)

HOW POLITICALS ARE RELEASED
(Letter written by V. T., Moscow)
(1922)

After the April, 1922 hunger-strike of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists, the Chairman of the "G. P. U.," Unschlicht, solemnly prom-

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ised that the imprisoned Left Socialist Revolutionists would be either referred to a trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal or banished. One of the arrested Left Socialist Revolutionists, who was kept together with the rest of the Left Socialist Revolutionists, Selyakoff (Borodin), was to have been either released or deported, as no accusation could be brought against him. As a matter of fact, after many squabbles with the "G. P. U.," the order to release Selyakoff came on June 7 (the number of the order being 598).

. . . But barely had Selyakoff put a foot outside the prison gates than two *Tchekists* threw themselves upon him, revolvers directed at him, and pushed him into a closed car ("dog car") standing close to the prison.

Before he had time to come to his senses, he was already in the Inner Prison of the "G. P. U." and was thrown into one of the most isolated cells.

Alarmed by Seylakoff's fate (someone of the prison inhbaitants had seen how Selyakoff was being "released"), the Left Socialist Revolutionists addressed themselves to the Political Red Cross and to the Chief of the Examining Section of the "G. P. U.," Andreyeva, who paid, a few days later, a visit to the prison. The "G. P. U.'s" emphatic reply was that Selyakoff was "free."

Yet, Selyakoff (Borodin) had, since June 10, declared a hunger-strike, demanding his transfer to normal prison conditions; his strike lasted until June 22; during this period he was examined repeatedly by Andreyeva herself.

On June 23, Selyakoff resorted to obstructive tactics in his cell, after which the prison Commandant, Dukis, arrived with *Tchekists* and dragged down Selyakoff to a cellar where he was brutally beaten by the *Tchekists* until he lost consciousness (the head warden of the second floor took part in the beating and recommended to beat under the ribs "so as not to leave any traces.")

When Selyakoff came to his senses, he found himself in a special punishment cell. He was then carried upstairs (he was unable to walk. . . . .) This ill-treatment continues at a time when the Supreme Tribunal had decided to bring Dukis to trial for former ill-treatment of prisoners in the Inner Prison. . . .

Another Re-Arrest

The Editor received the following communication just as this book was going to press, from Berlin, from the Joint Committee for the Defence of Imprisoned Revolutionists in Russia:

"Just received statement from the Left S. R. Delegation. It is to the effect that Irina Kakhovskaya, after having been exiled for two years, was again arrested and sentenced to three years to Viatka. At present she is sick in Lefortov prison, Moscow. Last year she under-

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went an operation but recently the wound opened and she had to be sewed up again. Moreover, both lungs are affected and she is in danger of her life.

"A demand for the release of Kakhovskaya should be made at once, so that she may go abroad for treatment.

"I hope your Committee may be able to do something in this matter.

"Greetings.

"JOINT COMMITTEE, DEFENSE IMPRISONED RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONISTS,

Per A. B., Corresponding Secretary."

The Editor has seen numerous statements with regard to re-arrests of exiles after their term of exile or imprisonment has expired. In the other sections of this book there is mention of numerous cases of such re-arrests. Aside from these, and this letter, the Editor has not received any documents on this subject. The whole matter of re-arrests of exiles has come up recently, since the terms of exile and imprisonment began, as a general thing, to expire only last year. Therefore, no extensive research into this subject has been possible.

PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSION OF THE LEFT SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONISTS

To the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of the U. S. S. R.: Declaration

(Late in 1923)

From the Central and Moscow Bureaux of the Union of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party and of the Maximalist Organization.

Our organization has become, during the last few months, the target of a series of repressive measures: arrests, deportations, imprisonments and concentration camps. Whereas the summer arrests and deportations might have been explained by the fear of the "G. P. U." called out by the Union's appearance on the arena of public relations with large groups of the working population—e.g., the meeting in commemoration of Lavroff* and the "Living Newspaper." both organized within the narrow limits of what is permitted by the Soviet constitution—the latest arrests and deportations are utterly unexplainable and incomprehensible even by the "G. P. U." itself.

The following members of the Union: A. A. Selivanova, L. Moshin, E. A. Golovina, N. and J. Karpoff, I. Petroff, E. E. Ignatieva, were arrested for having helped to prepare food for the prisoners, or (as in the case of Pupysheff) for having helped to transmit

*Arrests following what appears to have been a legal meeting by the Left Socialist-Revolutionists and Maximalists to celebrate the anniversary of the famous revolutionary Lavroff.

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this food to the prisoner. Such measures are applied to a body, the directing organs of which are having open meetings in open Clubs, and against which no accusation of any kind as to any unlawful acts having ever been formulated since the existence of the Union. On the other hand, peculiar questions are put to them by the examining authorities, such as "Why have you not yet joined the Russian Communist Party?" Propositions were made to them to resign from the Union, a proposition which, in the language of normal public decency, would be qualified as an act of political extortion. They demanded the resignations from the Union and tried to obtain these from persons who were not even members of it (Kuzminskaya).

All this leads us to the following conclusion: In spite of the fact that the Union had not overstepped, in the slightest degree, the limits of legality, the members of the Union and the sympathizers of its ideology are still persecuted in the numberless ways at the disposal of the punitive authorities: from prisons, administrative exile, concentration camp, joint imprisonment with common law criminals, up to provocatorial propositions, inclusively. We are compelled to conclude that these persecutions have one determined aim in view: the physical extermination of the members of the Union. How could one otherwise consider than as desire of this physical extermination, the order of the 'G. P. U." banishing U. Panibratzeff, suffering from tuberculosis, anemia and scurvy, to Ust-Ssyssolsk, 400 versts away from the railroad—a truly man-forsaken spot—or sending J. Braun, suffering from acute tuberculosis and cardiac neurosis, to the Suzdal concentration camp with a hard labor prison regime; or banishing K. Prokopovitch, L. Golovina, I. G. Petroff (Turkestan), E. Ignatieva (Kirghiz dictrict) to places where no work could be found; or transferring I. Petroff and N. Karpoff to a cell with common-law criminals, knowing that this would lead to a protest hunger-strike?

What are the intentions of the "G. P. U." when it calls upon the non-party members of an "artel," in which members of the Union also work, and compels them, under threats of all kinds, to expel our comrades from the "artel"? Is this not a step towards the physical extermination by hunger—knowing how great unemployment was and how difficult it was to find a job?

Protesting against the administrative punishment of members of the Union, the Central and Moscow Committees declare as follows: If the members of the Union have done anything incriminating in accordance with present-day legislation, these must be tried for their crimes. Only a trial could establish the guilt of this or that individual. . . . And although we know that the tribunal of the U. S. S. R. is exclusively a party tribunal, dependent upon the orders of the Russian Communist Party—at least, in political affairs—the Central and Moscow Bureaux of the Union none-the-less demand a *public trial* of the arrested members of the Union and declare that everyone

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of its members is ready, at any moment, to present himself before the Tribunal together with those arrested and banished.

Members of the Central and Moscow Bureaux of the Union

A. SELIVANOVA
V. BATURIN
A. SIVOFF
S. GAUKIN
S. TZYPIN
S. ZYRENKOFF

Secretaries:

G. NESTROYEV
A. ZVERIN

Attitude of the Russian Communist Party, of the Communist International and of the Red Trade Union International Towards Anarchists and Syndicalists

(*From the Archives of the Provisional Executive Bureau of the Russian Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists*)

(Covers occurences of 1920-21)

. . . A number of active workers in the Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist movement abroad came in 1920 to Moscow from the Congress of the Communist International: Comrade Souchy, delegate of the F. A. U. D. (German Syndicalists); A. Borghi, delegate of the Italian Syndical Union; A. Pestana, delegate of the Spanish Confederation of Labor; Lepetit (who perished on his way back) from France, and others.

The Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists held conferences with the foreign comrades and showed them quite clearly what the general situation in Russia was like, and, in particular, gave them an insight of the situation in which the Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists found themselves. As a result of these interviews and of the mutual information, the Provisional Executive Bureau of the Russian Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists transmitted to the delegates—in its name—two appeals to the world proletariat. One of these appeals referred to the war with Poland: in it, the proletariat abroad was invited to do its utmost to help Revolutionary Russia, at the same time warning it not to imitate the Russian example, not to follow the Bolshevists in their methods of making the Revolution.

Characteristic detail: the above appeal was photographed and published in the "Literataire" of Jan. 7-14, 19921 (No. 103). (See also No. 3 of April 8, 1921 of "La Antorcha," Buenos Aires.)

The other document, a more elaborate one, and which contained information upon the situation in Russia, calling upon all to protest against Bolshevist persecutions and against the shooting of Anarchists

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and other revolutionists, never reached Europe for reasons unknown (perhaps because of the strict Bolshevik censorship).

The persecution of Anarchists increased after the departure of the delegates. This compelled the Bureau to send a protest to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party against the tactics of the Party which was bent on the extermination of the Anarchist movement, pushing it underground to an illegal life.

We had also decided to obtain P. Kropotkin's signature under that protest. In a conversation I had with him, P. Kropotkin categorically refused to put his signature to that protest, and advised us not to protest before the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. ."*It would be ridiculous*," he said, "*to address a protest to the headquarters of the gendarmerie.*" . . .

As a result of the refusal of Kropotkin to join in our protest, the Executive Bureau reconsidered the question and it was decided to send a statement to the Communist International only, informing it of what was happening. This was found necessary, according to the Bureau, because of the persecutions becoming more and more widespread and brutal; it was, besides, urgent to destroy the pro-Bolshevist illusions of the foreign comrades who, owing to erroneous and insufficient information, were handing over the libertarian movement to the mercy of the Russian Communist Party.

The Executive Bureau considered that these illusions could best be done away with by a protest addressed to the Communist International, hoping that it might perhaps compel the Russian Communist Party to put a damper on its persecution of Anarchists and give the latter the right to conduct legally their propaganda. Both of these solutions were desirable. The Communist International would have been unable to act otherwise, as the protest was being addressed directly to it in which it was asked to put a stop to the Russian Communist Party's terror against Anarchists, and to render the position of Russian Anarchists equal to that settled towards foreign Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists with whom that Party was undoubtedly flirting.

As much as an affirmative answer would be disadvantageous to the Russian Communist Party, a negative one would be undesirable and harmful to the Communist International. The Executive Bureau would not have hesitated to circulate widely that reply: it would have unmasked the Communist International in the eyes of foreign Anarchists, and especially of Anarcho-Syndicalists whom Bolshevists dared not neglect. This they were well aware of. At least it was our impression, during our interview with Rosmer,* to whom we handed a French text of our protest with a covering letter

*French Syndicalist connected with the Third International in Moscow.

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addressed to him personally in which we asked him to submit our statement to the Executive of the Communist International.

The statement and the letter were handed personally by the author of this article and by Yartchuk to Rosmer in the presence of the Dutch delegate Janson (member of the Executive).

At this first interview, carried on in English, a great deal of time was taken up owing to Rosmer's desire to obtain ample and detailed information on the relations between Communists and Anarchists, on the role of the latter during the Revolution, and on their point of view on the current situation. Rosmer was friendly and promised to examine our statement, and let us have an early reply as to his readiness to submit it to the consideration of the Executive of the Communist International.

The second interview also took place at Rosmer's: this time A. Shapiro was present on our behalf as translator. Rosmer agreed to place our statement before the Communist International, but under one condition: that we would redraft it, eliminate the polemical tone and the attacks against the Russian Communist Party, and omit a few expressions injurious to the Communist International.

After a short discussion, we agreed that we would follow his advice.

Shortly after this conversation, numerous arrests took place in Kharkoff. The entire Anarchist movement of the Ukraine, known under the name of "Nabat" ("Alarm") was wrecked. Among the hundreds of arrested comrades were two or three dozen of our best workers: A. Baron, Dolenko-Tchekeress (who has since joined the Communist Party), Yartchuk (delegate of the Executive Bureau to the Congress which was to have taken place), M. Mratchny, B. Stoyanoff, Volin, and others.

Yartchuk being in prison, I was the only delegate of the Executive Bureau at the third interview with Rosmer at which A. Shapiro was again present in the capacity of translator. Janson was again present.

The manifesto which I had drawn up (and the text of which I give below) seemed to Rosmer even stronger than the first one. This was natural, as I had written it under the influence of the Kharkoff pogrom, from which I escaped by a mere accident. Rosmer flatly refused to submit the statement to the Executive. I was obliged to consent, on behalf of the Executive Bureau, to the alterations demanded with regard to the form as well as the text of the statement.

The third and final text of the manifesto, transmitted to Rosmer by A. Shapiro after the latter, together with other members of the "Golos Truda"* group, and myself, had redrafted it, differs from the text published below by the absence of polemical outbursts, and also

*"Voice of Labor".

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in that no time-limit was given to the Communist International during which its reply was to be sent; the period thus fixed during which no reply might be forthcoming was not to have been taken as a reply in the negative. A few days later, Rosmer notified us that the statement was handed over, and that it would be examined. One month later, Rosmer again notified us that the statement had been considered but that, in the absence of a quorum, without which no definite decision would be arrived at, the question was referred to the forthcoming session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International; a delegate of the organization which had drafted the Manifesto would be invited to attend the session.

In the meanitme, things turned out quite differently. A month later (March 8, 1921), the Russian Communist Party replied in lieu of the Communist International: Yartchuk (recently released from prison) and myself, were arrested.

A collective hunger-strike in the Taganka prison (Moscow), during which 13 Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists refused food for 10 days, compelled the Russian Communist Party to deport us abroad. This measure, used at that time for the first time, has by now become an every-day occurrence. It received the assent of the Communist International. Nay, the latter passed from the defensive to the offensive and published a libellous diatribe of Mr. Yakovlev entitled: "The Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists before the tribunal of the world proletariat." This pamphlet was distributed by the Communist International in different countries.

That was the answer to our statement.

The same attitude has also been adopted by the Red Trade Union International. The last sitting of that International's Congress closed, thanks to the eleventh hour intervention of Bukharin, who reduced the entire Anarchist movement of Russia to the "Makhnovshtshina" and to the rejoinder of Sirolle, with a scandalous uproar. The Russian Federation of Trade Unions took sides for the Communist International. This is its declaration:

"We declare hereby that some of the prominent individuals had taken an active part in the Makhnovist movement* and had occupied important posts in these bands. We possess all the necessary documents and Comrade Sirolle was cognizant of them. Some other groupings were intimately related to the counter-revolutionary "Makhnovshtshina",‡ as well as to the Kronstadt rebels."

. . . I publish here the text of the second statement, because the third, which differs little from this one, is in the hands of the *Vetcheka.* When arrested, my correspondence and the Archives of the

*Comrades Volin, Mratchny and a few others are here alluded to.

‡Followers of Makhno, leader of Ukrainian peasant rebellion against the Soviet Government.

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Provisional Executive Bureau of the Russian Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists were taken away—never to be returned. The original text is in the possession of the Communist International.

G. MAXIMOFF.

APPEAL BY BERKMAN, EMMA GOLDMAN AND OTHERS*

(July, 1921)

To V. I. Lenin, The All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, The Communist International, The All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, The International Council of Trades Unions. Copies to: The Council of People's Commissars, The Moscow Council of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The undersigned Anarcho-Syndicalist organizations, after having carefully considered the situation that has developed lately in connection with the country-wide persecution of Anarchists in Moscow, Petrograd, Kharkov, and other cities of Russia and the Ukraine —including the forcible suppression of Anarchist organizations, clubs, publications and so forth—hereby express their decisive and energetic protest against this unprecedented crushing of not only every agitational-propagandistic activity, but even of all purely cultural work by Anarchist organizations.

The systematic man-hunt of anarchists in general, and of Anarcho-Syndicalists in particular, with the result that every prison and jail in Soviet Russia is filed with our comrades, fully coincided in time and spirit with Lenin's speech at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. On that occasion Lenin announced that the most merciless war must be declared against what he termed "the petty bourgeois anarchist elements" which, according to him, are developing even within the Communist Party itself, owing to the "Anarcho-Syndicalist tendencies" of the Labor Opposition. On the very day that Lenin made the above statement, numbers of Anarchists were arrested all over the country, without the least cause or explanation. No charges have been preferred against any of our arrested comrades, though some of them have already been condemned to prison sentences, without hearing or trial, and in their absence. The conditions of their imprisonment are exceptionally vile and brutal. Thus one of the arrested, Comrade Maximov, after numerous vain protests against the incredibly unsanitary conditions in which he was forced to exist in the Taganka prison, was driven to the only means of protest left him—a hunger-strike, which he declared on April 1. Another comrade, Yartchuk, released after an imprisonment of six days, was soon rearrested, without any charges being preferred against him on either occasion.

According to reliable information received by us, some of the arrested Anarchists are being sent to the prisons of Samara, far away

*See note, page 221 of Part III.

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from home and friends, and thus deprived of what little comradely assistance they might have been able to receive nearer home. A number of other comrades have been forced by the terrible conditions of their imprisonment to declare a hunger-strike. One of them, after hungering twelve days, became dangerously ill.

Physical violence, even, is practiced upon our comrades in prison. The statement of the Anarchists in the Butirki Prison, in Moscow, signed by thirty-eight comrades, and sent to the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission on March 16, contains among other things the following statement: "On March 15, Comrade Tikhon Kashhirin was brutally attacked and beaten in the prison of the Special Department of the Extraordinary Commission by your agent Mago and assistants, in the presence of the Prison Warden Dukis."

Besides the wholesale arrests and the physical violence perpetrated on our comrades, the government is waging systematic war against the educational work of all Anarchist organizations. It has closed a number of our clubs, as well as the Moscow office of the Anarcho-Syndicalist publishing establishment "Golos Trooda."

A similar campaign of man-hunt took place in Petrograd, on March 15. Numbers of Anarchists were arrested, without cause, the office and the printing place of "Golos Trooda" were closed, and its co-workers imprisoned. No charges have been preferred against any of our arrested comrades, all of whom are still in prison.

The virtual suppression of the publishing work of the Anarcho-Syndicalist group "Golos Trooda" also paralyzes the main activity of the "Peter Kropotkin Memorial Committee," namely the publication of the works of Kropotkin. Endless obstacles are, moreover, placed in the way of the general work connected with the "Peter Kropotkin Memorial Committee," as in the matter of housing, telephone connections, and so forth.

These unbearably autocratic tactics of the government towards the Anarchists (going even to the extent of confiscating the wreaths on the Kropotkin grave for use at other funerals) is unquestionably the result of the general policy of the government, which is exclusively controlled by the Communist Party, in regard to Anarchism, Syndicalism and their adherents.

This state of affairs, in which the Anarchists are completely deprived of the opportunity to carry on systematic work of any kind, and in the absence of any guarantees that even our purely cultural and educational efforts—such as publishing, the organization of the Kropotkin Museum, and so forth—are not to be suddenly and deliberately destroyed, is forcing us to raise our voices in loud protest

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against the panicky-brutal suppression of the Anarchist movement by the Bolshevik Government.

Moscow, April 10, 1921.

ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST LEAGUE "GOLOS TROODA":
A. SHAPIRO, *Secretary*
A. TEVETKOV, *Publishing Manager*

RUSSIAN CONFEDERATION OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS:
S. MARKUS, *Member Executive Committee*
(Two other members in prison)

LEAGUE OF ANARCHIST PROPAGANDA:
ALEXEI BOROVOY, *Secretary*

We fully concur in this protest:
ALEXANDER BERKMAN
EMMA GOLDMAN

TROTZKY'S REPLY

(July, 1921)

To Com. Michel* and to the other comrades who composed the delegation which visited yesterday Com. Lenin:

Dear Comrades:

The Central Committee of our Party has again, this morning, examined with due care the question of the imprisoned Anarchists which was called for in your yesterday's talk with Lenin.

We are fully aware of the necessity of being exceedingly careful in our handling the question of imprisoned Anarchists. The more is this necessary that the Western European Anarcho-Syndicalists, among them being those who play a very important and positive role in the revolutionary movement, do not always make the necessary differentiation between the Anarchists and Syndicalists who, while preserving the peculiarities of their opinions, consider it, nonetheless, as their revolutionary duty to support the dictatorship of the Russian proletariat against the world bourgeoisie—and those who, sheltering themselves behind an extreme revolutionary phraseology, carry out, in fact, a counter-revolutionary activity, dealing blows from behind to the Soviet Power, at a time when the latter is turned with its face to its imperialist enemies.

The fact that Anarchists, who have exterminated, helped to exterminate or advised to exterminate Communists, are hunger-striking in prison can, in no way—you will agree—serve as a pretext for their release. In the meantime those prisoners whom, as you know, we have found possible, at considerable risk, to release, refuse to go out

*Michel, French Syndicalist, while on his way out of Russia, was drowned in the passage by a small boat from a Northern Russian port to Norway.

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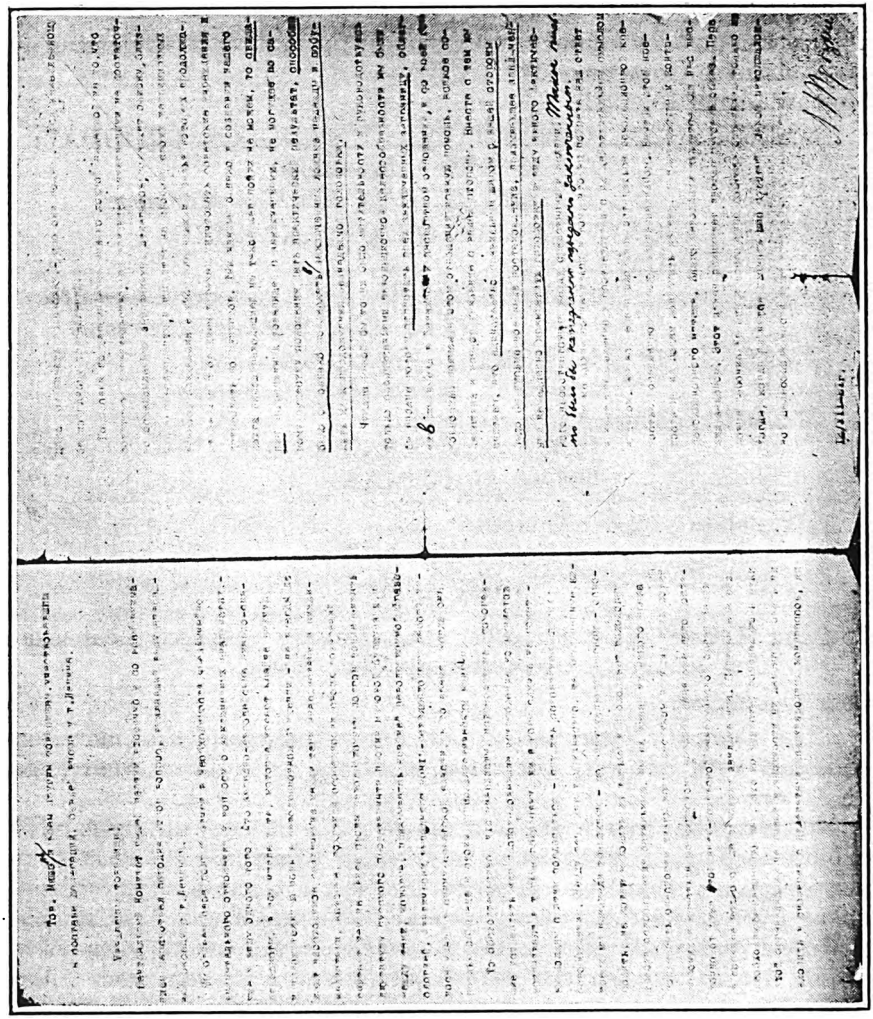

FACSIMILE OF LETTER TO MICHEL, BY TROTZKY

of prison and continue their hunger-strike, demanding the release of the others. We have no right whatever to expose the lives of fresh dozens and, perhaps, hundreds of Communist workers and peasants, a large number of whom have already fallen into the hands of the anti-Soviet Anarchist organization in which the imprisoned Anarchists were active. We consider it necessary to remind you again that the Communists who fall into the hands of that organization have no opportunity either to make any protests or to get into touch with delegates to International Congresses, or even to declare hunger-strikes—because they are immediately and mercilessly exterminated.†

†He doubtless refers to the Makhno rebels whom Anarchists were accused of supporting.

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The hunger-strike is actually kept up by the false hope that the Soviet Government will, under the influence of the intervention of insufficiently informed foreign delegates, commit the error, approaching to a crime, and release its irreconcilable enemies, whose closest partisans and friends still continue by force of arms to destroy Soviet institutions and to exterminate Communists. As we cannot, fully conscious of our duties towards the revolution, take such a step, any *interview* of the foreign comrades with the prisoners which could not, because of the nature of the situation, give any practical results, *would be capable, however, of raising, among the prisoners, false hopes and of inducing them to continue a hopeless hunger-strike.*

Free from any spirit of revenge, considerations of revolutionary expediency alone dictating our steps, we would be willing *to let all the prisoners go abroad*, facilitating their departure by providing them with passports and financial means, and we are ready to accept, in this direction, any help, assistance and indications which you might give us.

We consider, nevertheless, that *the only right step on your part would be a written declaration on your part appealing to the prisoners to cease immediately their hunger-strike*, considering the manifest discrepancy between the means and the aim. Such letter would be immediately transmitted to the prisoners.

We do not wish to doubt that you will understand the actual sense and spirit of our answer and of our propositions. We still consider ourselves a revolutionary fortress, besieged by the world imperialism. Within this fortress no treason, treachery or counter-revolutionary rebellion can be permitted by us. The welfare of the revolution is our supreme law. This law takes sometimes a stern form. The advance-guard of the workmen of Europe and of the whole world will only then triumph over the bourgeoisie when they will learn to place the stern law of revolutionary expediency above all other considerations.

With comradely greetings,

12-7-1921. L. TROTZKY.

UNION OF CHEMICAL WORKERS
(1924)

The story of the Moscow Union of Chemical Workers is the story of the painful struggle of 30,000 workers for the right to possess an independent union.

The democratically built organization of the Chemical Workers, with its regular fortnightly meetings, with its periodical reports of

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the officials in the factories, needing no subsidies, living on its own income, has given, of course, no chance to the Communists in their attempts to conquer our Union ideologically. They resorted, to begin with, to technical methods. Thus, in 1919, by decision of the Communist Council of Trade Unions, the organizations of the workers in the rubber industry was, together with its Administrative Board, composed solely of Communists, incorporated with the Chemical Workers' Union. They hoped, in this way, to be able to "dilute" the Union, but before a month had passed, the entire mass of workers in the rubber industry accepted the Amsterdam platform, while the former Bolshevist leaders were replaced by our "independent" comrades. A year later, the small organization of glass-workers, numbering 5,000 members, together with its Bolshevist Executive, was incorporated, under conditions of a paritary Executive, with our Union which, at that time, consisted of 25,000 memebrs. But 2-3 months later, the glass-workers, too, accepted unreservedly the Amsterdam revolutionary banner of our Union.

Side by side with these "incorporating" tactics, repressive measures were ceaselessly taken against members of the Union's Executive, members of Factory Committees and, finally, against a large number of rank-and-file members of the Union, these measures bearing an economic as well as a political character. Thus, with a view of sifting out the opposition, the largest State rubber factory in Moscow, "Bogatyr," with 5,000 workmen, was twice locked out; the same operation was gone through with the workers of the State perfumery factory, formerly known as "Ralle's" factory. Arrest of members of factory committees, of delegates, of members of the Executive of the Union alternated uninterruptedly (Volin, Zakharoff, Honigberg, who are up to this day in exile, and dozens of others whose names, with a view of avoiding fresh persecutions, cannot be mentioned here). There was almost no period in the life of the Union when one or other of its leaders in Moscow or in the provinces was not under arrest. The minutes of the Delegates' Conferences for that period are strewn with demands for release. There were State factories (the Troitzk outfitting factory) where the Director would arrest, on his own responsibility, members of the Union or members of the Factory Committee and keep them under arrest either in a guardhouse specially built on the factory's premises, or send them, with an accompanying letter, under escort and afoot, to the district and thence to the provincial prison (e.g., the Chairman of the Factory Committee, Kukushkin).

The directors of State factories, whether old directors or new—Communist—directors, did not lag behind in this fight against the Union. The whip and the cake—well-tried methods in the struggle against workers—have both been widely applied by the Managing Boards of State factories in the fight against the Union members.

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The powerful organization of the Union did not limit itself, however, to Union affairs only. During the difficult days which the country had to go through, when, under the blows of reaction, the conquests of the revolution were in jeopardy, the Union was a live force, capable of active resistance and showing it in practice. In such periods, not only the members of the Union Executive, not only its Chairman, follower of Amsterdam, but also the rank-and-file members left, when called upon by the Union, for the front to repulse the advance of the Whites.

But, remaining independent, fighting against lock-outs and attempts to build the national economy upon the complete exhaustion of labor forces, the democratically organized Union was, naturally, in the way of the governing Party; and as soon as the external situation of the country improved, barely had the ideas of democracy time to instill themselves in the working class, than the repressive measures against the Union perceptibly increased. In March, 1921, already, when the Union's Congress had decided to send its fraternal greetings to the International Federation of Factory Workers, and proposed to the All-Russian Union of Chemical Workers to join that Federation so as to strengthen the revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of labor, an ultimatum was presented to the Union by the Communist authorities: either to rescind the greetings to the "yellow" International, or to be dissolved.

Half a year later, when the chances of conquering the Union from within had become utterly hopeless, the Communists declared open war. Under the pretext of "straightening out the policy of the Union," the Communist Council of Trade Unions resolved to convene an extraordinary Congress of the Union of Chemical Workers. The actual calling of the Congress, as well as the carrying out of the electoral campaign, were withdrawn from the sphere of activities of the Union and were handed over to a special Commission composed of Communists. The elections of delegates were carried out by the representatives of the local Committees of the Communist Party, while, what with threats of dismissal, and actual dismissal and arrests, everything was done to remove the opposition candidates in many factories. The Directors themselves were put forward as candidates, the voting taking place by a show of hands in the presence of these directors. And still, this Congress, in spite of the large number of Communist directors present at it, did not realize Bolshevist hopes; the majority of the Congress was for Amsterdam. The dissolution of the Congress followed on the well-established lines: the Communist minority left the Congress and, there and then, sent a handful of its men for the revolutionary—or fascist—capture of the Union's premises and safe.

The next day the authorities (the Council of Trade Unions) an-

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nounced the dissolution of the Executive elected by the Congress and the ratification, as Executive, of a handful of Communists.

Then began the "straightening out" of the Union's line. Dozens of leaders were dismissed from the factories, then arrested and exiled; they could tell a good deal about this straightening out. It is not yet completed. And to-day, in 1924, side by side with the victorious declaration of the absence, in the composition of the Union, of even a shadow of any other party, the persecutions have become still more ferocious and merciless, and the Soviet prisons are still more densely populated.

Certification

The above document has been written by a Trade-Union leader, member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, known personally to the Delegation Abroad and which, hereby, certify its authenticity.

ARON JUGOW,
Secretary of the Delegation Abroad of the
Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

Berlin, Dec. 1, 1924. (*Seal*)

APPEAL AGAINST MISREPRESENTATION

To the Bureaus of the Second International and of the Amsterdam Federation:

(1924)

We, Russian workers, live under conditions of complete political arbitrariness; there is no freedom of meetings, no freedom of speech, no freedom of the press. For a casual modest criticism of the action of trade unions we are put in prison. The conditions of our illegal activities on behalf of democracy and Socialism—are worse than a nightmare. A terrible wave of unemployment which guarantees to nobody his next day's work, a frightful political yoke, have changed us into regular slaves. . . . The only joy in our underground life was the voice of the European workers united in the Second International and in the Amsterdam Federation. To our great sorow, their voice, too is now silent. Lately, the representatives of the Amsterdam Federation came to Moscow, namely Edo Fimmen and Susanah Lawrence. They were not official representatives, but they both occupy responsible posts in organizations with which we are in friendly relations. These representatives have fallen straight into the arms of the representatives of the Soviet Power and of the trade union bureaucracy who took them round in motor cars, exhibited to them the show institutions, and drove the workers to specially arranged meetings in their honor, compelling them to shout hurrah. . . .

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And E. Fimmen was so touched by all this, that he stated—no more, no less—that the Bureau of the Amsterdam Federation was the flunkey of the bourgeoisie. . . .

At the same time as the "followers" of the Amsterdam Federation are being toasted by our oppressors, their followers, the Russian Social-Democrats, the Socialists in general, are languishing and perishing by thousands in prison, in the Solovetz Isles and other hard labor camps, as well as in the Siberian and other numerous places of exile.

These unfortunate men and women, left to their own devices and to the mercies of the *Tcheka*, are fighting a terrible fight by means of hunger-strikes, of suicides, for the most elementary human rights.

Why has not anyone of these representatives asked to be shown a prison, a concentration camp, where thousands of Russian Socialists are kept?

We ask, we beg, the Bureau of the Second International and of the Amsterdam Federation not to allow such tactless voyages to be undertaken by their followers. . . .

We address ourselves to the European workers with the following request: Help, materially and morally, our Socialist comrades who, for years, languish in the prisons and who, through sheer underfeeding, are almost all suffering from scurvy and typhoid fever, and die like flies.

We Russian workers, are unable to send any help to our suffering comrades, because in Soviet Russia even collecting funds for imprisoned Socialists is severely punished by imprisonment and deportation.

GROUP OF WORKMEN OF THE PUTILOFF FACTORY.

I certify hereby that the above letter has been received by the Delegation Abroad from Russia. The signatures are in the Archives of the Central Committee.

Berlin, 12-17-1924. AARNOW JUGOW,

The Secretary of the Delegation Abroad.

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(Part V.)

Questionnaires

During the course of the investigation which has resulted in the collection of the material partly reprinted in this book, it became apparent that there must be a wealth of material available from the refugees of the revolutionary groups in various European countries. These individuals, if so inclined, could certainly give very first-hand information as to their experiences under Bolshevik rule with regard to political persecution. Their testimony would not suffer from the handicaps under which the investigation with regard to persons actually in Russian jails labored. The revolutionary refugees could give information freely, without fear of consequences, and this information could be freely transmitted without intervention of prison or censorship authorities. Therefore the investigators undertook, toward the end of their investigation, the task of collecting affidavits from revolutionary refugees as to their experiences of persecution in Soviet Russia. Owing, however, both to lack of time and means for a proper prosecution of the work only forty-seven affidavits, by forty-four individuals, were obtained. These forty-seven affidavits are listed below.

The affidavits were made in response to a questionnaire-form drawn up and transmitted to each prospective affiant. The form of the affidavit is also given below. Every affidavit has been duly sworn to or certified, even more carefully than in the case of the other documents. The certification was rather easy since the affiants could in most instances actually appear in person before a notary, or, where that was not possible, before a witness who could identify them.

Owing to lack of space, it has been impossible to reprint all the affidavits. A few, those of Mollie Steimer, Fleshin, Madame Zubelevitch, Idelson, and excerpts from others, have been given elsewhere in the places where they reenforced other documents. Ten of them are printed here in full, as samples of the list. It was difficult to make a choice; the final selection was made with the intrinsic interest of the affidavit itself, in view, or the fact that it dealt with fairly recent conditions, or that it was representative of one of the main persecuted groups. The affidavits of the Zionist-Socialists refer to most recent events, as they date for the most part from in

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1924. They show prison conditions for the politicals as pretty bad, even at that late date.

The general contents of the questionnaire-affidavits may be summed up as follows:

Party affiliations of affiants:

Mensheviks	12
Zionist-Socialists	16
Socialist-Revolutionists	4
Left Socialist-Revolutionists	3
Anarchists	7
Non-Partisan	2
Total	44

Of the forty-four affiants, had been members of revolutionary parties before 1917	30
Of this number, had suffered from persecution before the October Revolution	18
Of the forty-four, the Soviet Government had prosecuted in one form or another	44
Number of deportations abroad, or "permissions to go abroad" in lieu of serving a sentence in Russia, or banishment abroad direct, or declaration of banishment after individual had gone abroad voluntarily, etc.	34
Note: Almost all the affiants, before getting abroad had to suffer numerous arrests, imprisonments and other political persecutions.	
Number of arrests suffered by the forty-four in all	136
Average of arrests per person somewhat more than	3

It would serve no useful purpose to give here the sum total sentences of imprisonment and concentration camps or exile passed upon these forty-four persons. The total would amount to considerably more than one hundred years. As, however, most of them served only a short part of their sentences this amazing total is deceptive. However, all of the forty-four served some time in jail or exile ,and a great many of them served considerable periods before they were released to go abroad. Again, the release of most of them to go abroad (a number of the Zionist-Socialists excepted) was only accomplished by long and severe hunger-strikes and "obstructions" or by protests from foreign proletarian organizations.

Only a few of the forty-four had any sort of trial.

Very few had access to counsel. Many of them were sentenced without any formal hearing whatsoever, although, more recently, at least, there had usually been some sort of an examination of the accused both by a magistrate and the board which decides on administrative

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exile. And more recently, as well, a condemned man has been given his sentence to read in written form.

From these affidavits it is hard to get any final data as to the law's delays with regard to these forty-four. Again, the general tendency more recently is to give the accused some sort of examination more speedily than formerly and to pass judgment on him more quickly. Exactly what the average time is between arrest and sentence of a political at present, the Editor has no means of determining. (See, however, page 222, quotation from a communist official's statement on this subject as late as the fall of 1924).

The charges on which the forty-four allege they were convicted, when informed of formal charges at all, and when they had a chance to read such charges, were mostly as follows:

For belonging to one of the proscribed parties, Socialist- Revolutionists, Socialist-Revolutionists of the Left, Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, Anarchist, Socialist-Zionists.

"Taking into consideration that for five years you have not made peace with the Soviet Power, and in a particularly difficult time you intensified your work against it....."

"Counter-revolutionary activity."

"Opposition work to the Soviet Authorities."

For handing a memorandum to the British Labor Delegation in 1920 "for the purpose of creating general dissatisfaction among the workers, and to aid internal and external counter-revolution." "Keeping and spreading counter-revolutionary literature and undermining the Soviet Government by agitating and spreading counter-revolutionary literature."

"Case not proved and therefore quashed. But, because of anti-Soviet activity, exiled for two years....."

"Three years prison as an Anarchist....."

"Participation in an organization aiming to give aid to the international bourgeoisie."

For working with the Society to Aid Imprisoned Anarchists.

Most of these charges come under some one or other article of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the S. S. S. R. A few of these articles are reprinted in Part VI. . . . The recent tendency here, again, is to regularize and make more definite the procedure, that is, to bring the accusation definitely within the code section considered applicable.

The Editor by no means wishes to give the impression, here or elsewhere in this book, that he is giving a complete picture of the legal situation with regard to the politicals in Russia. With the limited means and time at his disposal, and the difficulty of obtaining data, both official and unofficial, he has had to confine himself to reprinting what appeared to him the most important of the available facts and laws. In justice not only to the politicals but, even more so, in justice

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to the Soviet Government, a thorough-going study of this whole subject should be undertaken by someone with the proper technical equipment and sufficient means. In such an event, no doubt, the Soviet authorities would be interested to give the greatest co-operation.

LIST OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND AFFIDAVITS

1. Theodore Dan (Leader of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, ordinarily known as Mensheviks.—Author.) Deported abroad January 1922.
2. Mark Kammermacher (Former Chairman of the Moscow Union of Printers, Menshevik).
3. Gregor Aronsohn (Menshevik. Member of the Executive Committee of the "Bund", a Jewish socialist organization.) Freed from prison on condition that he go abroad. January 1922.
4. Anna Kaplan-Rubenstein (Menshevik) Deported abroad, in lieu of exile, on January 31st, 1922.
5. Nadeschda Peremeschko (Menshevik) Deported abroad October, 1922.
6. Dr. Solomon Monossohn (Menshevik) Deported abroad January, 1922.
7. Dr. George Bienstock (Social Democrat—probably means Menshevik.—Ed.—) Forced emigration end of 1922.
8. Aaron Jugow (Menshevik) Deported July 1922.
9. Dr. Peter Bronstein-Garwy (Menshevik) Deported from exile March 1923.
10. Israel Aisenstadt-Yudin (Menshevik. Member of "Bund") Deported January 1922.
11. Maxim J. Mendelstamm (Social Democrat—means probably Menshevik.—Ed.—) Escaped abroad from Siberia 1923.
12. N. I. Singarevitch (Social Democrat—probably means Menshevik—) Escaped from exile apparently late in 1922.
13. Peter Tutkovsky (Socialist Revolutionist) now in Ghent.
14. P. A. Dzen (Socialist-Revolutionist) Helsingfors, Finland. Escaped to Finland May, 1922.
15. N. A. Bezpalov (Socialist-Revolutionist)Prag. (2 Affidavits).
16. Julia M. Zubelevitch (Socialist-Revolutionist) Deported abroad from Orenburg, where she was in exile, March 1924.
17. S. S. Gan (Left Socialist-Revolutionist) Escaped to Poland Sept. 1924. (See also his other affidavit, page 124).
18. I. Z. Steinberg (Left Socialist-Revolutionist). People's Commissar for Justice in the beginning of the Bolshevik régime, until April 1918. His voluntary departure abroad on a visit declared to be "forever" by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets in 1923.

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19. Ilya Bakkal (Left Socialist-Revolutionist) Deported "forever", penalty for returning, was to be shot. Deportation took place in September 1922.
20. A. M. Feldman (Anarchist). Deported January 1922.
21. Mark Klavansky (M. Mratchny). Deported abroad as Anarchist January 1922.
22. M. E. Reitman (Pseudonym) (Anarchist). Left Russia voluntarily.
23. S. I. Fleshin (Anarchist). Deported abroad September 1923. See pages 104 and 177.
24. G. P. Maximov (Anarchist). Deported abroad.
25. A. M. Shapiro (Anarchist). Deported abroad November 6th, 1922.
26. Mollie Steimer (Anarchist). Deported abroad September 27, 1923.
27. Mollie Steimer Ditto. For this and No 26 see pages 93 and 99.
28. M. I. Kyavyaynen (Non-Partisan). Escaped to Finnland November 1924.
29. M. A. Ossorgin (Non-Partisan). Deported fall of 1922.
30. I. B. Idelson (Zionist Socialist Party). Exile to Tiumen, changed to permission to go to Palestine as alternative, Spring of 1924.
31. Moisei G. Waissbein (Zionist Socialist Party). Deported abroad from exile in Vologda in the beginning of 1924.
32. Aronov Schneer or Schneer Aronov. (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine, evidently in lieu of his sentence to a prison camp, July 1924.
33. Chaim B. Halperin. (Zionist Socialist). Deported to Palestine, in lieu of exile to Tiumen, May 1924.
34. E. I. Pipik (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine, instead of exile to the North, December 5, 1924.
35. L. I. Levin (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine, in lieu of serving three years sentence in a concentration camp, about June 1924.
36. Isai S. Jofin (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine, in lieu of serving three years' sentence in Solovetz concentration camp, Summer of 1924.
37. Chaim Bralovsky (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine in lieu of serving sentence of three years administrative exile in Zirjansky Krai, 1924.
38. Zelman G. Gornik (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine, in lieu of serving sentence in Siberia, December 1924.
39. Abram Greenberg (Zionist-Socialist). After year's exile in Tambov, permitted to leave Russia because of illness, late in 1924.
40. R. A. Kogan (Zionist-Socialist). Deported to Palestine in lieu of serving three years' sentence in concentration camp, July 1924.

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41. M. I. Lechtman (Zionist-Socialist). Sentence changed from three years in concentration to deportation to Palestine. Left Russia Summer of 1924.
42. M. I. Krupnik (Zionist-Socialist). Sent out to Palestine in lieu of exile to North, December 1924.
43. Bas-Sheva A. Khaikina(Zionist-Socialist). Sentence of three years to concentration camp changed to permission to leave for Palestine. Deported from Russia June 1924.
44. M. I. Nemirovsky (Zionist-Socialist. Departure to Palestine as obligatory alternative to exile in the North. Departure from Russia in 1924.
45. Nachman Duma (Zionist-Socialist). Escaped abroad while being sent into exile in Orenburg for three years. Escaped out of Russia and went to Palestine in August 1924.

QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Name in full .....
2. Place and date of birth.....
3. Age .....
4. Political affiliation .....
5. Since when .....
6. If political affiliation has changed, state when, how often, and how.. .....
7. Persecution before 1917:
   a) What kind .....
   b) How often arrested.....
   c) What punishment incurred (prison or exile, state where and how long) .....
8. Persecution since 1917:
   a) How often arrested .....
   b) When and where .....
   c) How was arrest carried out (hour of the day, by whose order, was order shown) .....
9. How long in prison till first examination or hearing, and where imprisoned .....
10. Was any charge brought (when and what kind; verbal or in writing .....
11. How long in prison between arrest and sentence, or release....
12. In what prison .....
13. Conditions of prison life (feeding, accommodation, treatment, any protests — individual or collective — obstruction, etc. Give details .....
14. Did you have a trial.....
    a) When, where, by what court.
    b) By judges or by jury ....
15. a) Were you permitted counsel..
    b) Was defense counsel chosen by you or given by the authorities .....
16. Is there any record of the proceedings .....
17. What was your sentence .....
18. a) If no trial, by whom were you sentenced .....
    b) Verbally or in writing .....
    c) On what grounds .....
19. Conditions of imprisonment (or exile)after sentence .....
    a) Where and how long in each place .....
    b) Give details of protests, individual or collective, hunger-strikes, obstructions, etc.....
20. If deported abroad, state under what conditions, time, place....
21. If escaped, state (if possible), how and when .....
22. Further remarks .....

Date.....

City.....

.....

(Signature)

THEODOR DAN

(Deported January, 1822)

(Leader of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party)

1. Theodor Dan (Gurwitsch).

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2. Petersburg, October 7 (19), 1871.
3. 53 years of age.
4. R. S. D. L. P. (Russian Social Democratic Labor Party).
5. Since its very organization.
6. (Political affiliation) did not change.
7. a) Administrative (persecution before 1917).
   b) Seven times.
   c) Almost three and a half years (3½) of preliminary imprisonment in the Petersburg Preliminary Detention Prison, in the Petr. fortress, in the Narva and Kolomensky Districts, in the Taganka and Butirky Prisons.
   Three times (3) exile: Provence of Viatka, 3 years; in Eastern Siberia—10 years (escaped after 2 months); and 4 years (after 1½ years was called to military service).
8. a) 3 times (under the Bolsheviki).
   b) The first two times in Moscow (March and April, 1919) the third time in Petersburg (February, 1921).
   c) (Arrested) in the evening, by order of the M-*Tcheka* (Moscow *Tcheka*) and P-*Tcheka* (Petrograd *Tcheka*). Warrant was shown.
9. The first time I was freed after one day. The second time I was kept in the Butirky Prison 4-5 months without an examination. In 1921 the magistrate of the "G. P. U." visited the prison 4 months after my arrest.
10. No charge presented.
11. The last time more than 10 months (between arrest and liberation.
12. In the Butirky, Moscow.
13. In 1921 the accommodations in the Peter-Paul Fortress were of the worst,—damp and dark. The food bad.
    Later, in the House of Preliminary Detention, the quarters passable, feeding bad. In the Butirky, the quarters good, and later on the food also entirely satisfactory.
    The treatment extremely changeable. In January, 1922, a 7-day hunger strike, with the demand that the conditions of administrative exile be changed.
    Details about all this in my book, "Dva Goda Skitanii" (Two Years of Wandering").
14. There was no trial.
15. The record of the examination by the *Vetcheka* Magistrate Agrapovitch should be in the *Vetcheka*. (All-Russian *Tcheka*.)
16. By the Collegium of the *Vetcheka* (Record of proceedings).
17. Counter-revoluntionary activity. (Sentence on accusation).
20. (Deported abroad) In January, 1922, after a 7-day hunger strike in the Moscow Butirky Prison.
22. (Remarks) During my private conversations with the *Vetcheka*

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Magistrate Agranov and the Acting Chairman of the *Vetcheka* Unschlicht, those persons made no secret of the fact that the actual decision in my case was made by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. (Nov. 23, 1924, Berlin).

F. DAN.

NADESCHDA PEREMESCHKO (Woman)

(Deported fall of 1922)

1. Nadeschda Dmitrovna Peremeschko.
2. City of Moglin, Tchernigov Province, 1896.
3. 28 years of age.
4. Russian Social Democratic Labor Party.
5. Since 1917.
8. a) Seven times (since 1917).
   b) In the City of Potchep, Tchernigov Province, twice: in April and in October, 1918.
   In Briansk, one time (arrested) after trial, Dec. 18, 1918.
   In Moscow, 3 times: in Feb. 1920; in April, 1920, and in July, 1922.
   In Petrograd, one time, in October, 1922.
   c) In Potchep, both times on the street, by order of the Tchernigov *Vetcheka*.
   (Because of the German occupation of the Tchernigov Province all except three counties—the Provincial *Tcheka* had its headquarters in the City of Potchep).
   The second time, during our manifestation (demonstration) in honor of the German Revolution.
   In Briansk (arrested) by order of the court of the Briansk Revolutionary Tribunal.
   In Moscow: in February, at a general meeting, in the evening, —do not remember whether was a warrant. In April, on the street, without a warrant. In July, 1922, also on the street, without a warrant, in the day time.
   In Petrograd, as I left the railroad car, in the evening, without a warrant.
9. (Held) In quarters of the Potchep Militia one day (in Potchep there is no prison.) Then I was freed on the guarantee by the administration of the Union of Teachers of the Potchep County. I remained free under the personal responsibility of the Chairman of the Union, V. A. Guseev, till my next arrest in October.
   Had one examination by the Provincial *Tcheka*, in the summer.
10. In the City of Potchep I received the charge (was charged with) in written form of sabotage and agitation of a counter-revolutionary character against the Soviet Government.

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Предъявитель сего, гражданин Российской Социалистической Федеративной Советской Республики

отправляется

в удостоверение чего и для свободного проезда дан сей паспорт с приложением печати Народного Комиссариата по Иностранным Делам.

Москва, 192 г.

По уполномочию Народного Комиссара Иностранным Делам

Заведывающий Отделом Виз и Паспортов

Le porteur du présent passeport, citoyen de la République Socialiste Fédérative des Soviets de Russie

se rend

en foi de quoi et pour le libre passage le présent passeport est délivré avec apposition du sceau du Commissariat du Peuple aux Affaires Étrangères.

Moscou, le 192

Par autorisation du Commissaire du Peuple aux Affaires Étrangères

(Signé)

Chef de la Section des Visas et Passeports

PHOTO: PAGE FROM PASSPORT OF NADESCHA PEREMESCHKO, EXPELLED FROM RUSSIA.

In Briansk, where I was sent by the Tchernigov *Tcheka* for trial, the charge was changed to "refusal to recognize the Soviet Government"—that happened at the hearing after the authorities demanded that I do not testify as a member of the Social Democratic Labor Party, but as non-partisan, which I refused to do.

In Moscow the first two times there was no charge. Simply as a member of the Menshevik Party.

In the month of July (1922.—Ed.) charges were made on the basis of two Articles (of the Criminal Code)—I don't remember just what Articles they were. In essence they were: Keeping and spreading counter-revolutionary literature; and the undermining of the Soviet Government by agitation and the spreading of counter-revolutionary literature.

In Petrograd (October, 1922.—Ed.) the charge was "disturbing the public peace by carrying on conversations in a public place (railroad car) of a counter-revolutionary character(undermining

11. In the City of Potchep (imprisoned) the first time one day; the second time, three weeks; and in Briansk, one week. Then I was

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freed after an examination, by giving a written promise not to leave Potchep and to appear at the trial. After the trial, in prison in Briansk two weeks. In Moscow, in February, (1920) one day; in April (1920.—Ed.) 8 months, till end of December. In July, 1922, two and a half months. In Petrograd, one day.

12. In Potchep (kept) at the quarters of the Potchep Militia, at first in a common cell with ordinary criminals; then in solitary. In Briansk, in a common cell with the criminals, in the House of Arrest. In Moscow in the common cells of the Novinsk (common criminal) Prison—one cell was given for the Socialist women numbering 24 persons. Also in the Butyrky Prison. In solitary at the "inner" prison of the "G. P. U." the last two and a half months.
13. In Potchep: we received only bread. Other things were permitted us to receive by way of packages from relatives. In Briansk we got: three quarters of a pound of bread, one piece of sugar, and twice soup made of potatoes and herring. Quarters in Briansk are in the cellar; were not permitted to open the windows. There was no exercise. In Potchep there was also no exercise. The usual furniture of the cell—the toilet bucket—was in the corridor and we had to go to it accompanied by a guard.
    In Moscow, in the Novinsk Prison, the food was about the same as in Briansk, with the addition of a small piece of butter and some *Kasha* (gruel). In the Butirky, at the time, the Socialists received an additional ration and it was much better there. In both prisons we had exercise, books, and newspapers.
    In the "inner" prison (of the *Vetcheka*.—Ed.): half a pound of bread, soup twice, a piece of sugar. No exercise, nor book or papers. No visits with relatives. The first month there were no packages from the outside permitted. The cell was a solitary with iron bars in the windows; a legion of mice that permitted no sleep at night, constant burning of the light in the cell, day and night. We had two hunger strikes. The first time in the Novinsk Prison, for the transfer to another prison. The second time, in the "inner" prison, for a change in the place of exile. After 2½ months of imprisonment we were notified about our exile to Turukhansky Krai for three years. That was later changed to being sent away abroad. The first hunger strike lasted 5 days; the second, 3 days.
14. a) Yes. (Did you have a trial?)
    b) In Briansk Revolutionary Tribunal. December 18, 1918.
    c) By judges.
15. a) I refused to have any defense.
    b) Was offered by the authorities.
16. Records in the Briansk Revolutionary Tribunal.
17. One month of imprisonment for "not recognizing Soviet Government". After two weeks of punishment, was freed. The chairman

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of the Court, named Pereversev, declared that because of the amnesty of October, 1918, my case should have been quashed, and that a mistake had been made. On my way home, in Potchep, I received a notice informing me that because of the amnesty I am freed from serving my sentence.

18. Q. If no trial, by whom were you sentenced?
    a) By the Collegium of the "G. P. U." in October, 1922.
    b) In written form.
    c) Charge based on the Articles of the Code mentioned above. At first sentenced to exile to Turukhansky Krai, which was changed to being sent out abroad.
19. In the City of Briansk, two weeks in the House of Arrest, in a common cell with criminals,—conditions described above.
20. As mentioned above, exile to Turukhansky Krai for 3 years was changed to exile abroad, without the right of returning to S.S.S.R. On my question why exile for 3 years to Turukhansky Krai is changed to exile forever abroad, the "G. P. U." Magistrate Austrin frankly declared to me: "Because 3 years in Turukhansky Krai is worth as much as a liftime abroad."
22. 1) In the summer of 1918 (when I was already on guarantee of the Union of Teachers) the Chairman of the Executive Committee (of the Government) Khobotko, during elections for teachers, removed my name as a candidate at the session of the Election Committee, on the ground that I was "guilty of counter-revolution."
    2) After the trial, in January, 1919, I was discharged from my position in the Food Committee of the Tchernigov Province, by order of the Chairman of the Collegium, because I "had been on trial in the Revolutionary Tribunal".
    3) My arrest in Petrograd took place under the following circumstances: In the month of October (1922.—Ed.) I was on my way abroad through Petrograd. I had received 10 days' time to leave, after my imprisonment. The railway ticket was bought beforehand for me by my Petrograd relatives. I journeyed one day before sailing on the boat. In the car, asked where I am going to, I replied frankly and also mentioned the cause. One of the passengers in the car tried to begin a conversation on party-political lines. Fearing lest I fall into the "G. P. U." again instead of reaching the boat, I wanted to abstain from conversation. But the man assured me on his word of honor that our conversation would not go further than that car, and that he respects the opinions of other people and that I may speak freely.
    In consequence of that, I was arrested in Petrograd as soon as I left the car, and I was taken to the Railroad Department of the "G. P. U." Within 48 hours the Magistrate faced me with

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the report of my conversation in the car with the unknown passenger. To my request to name the identity of the man who denounced me, the Magistrate replied that the person held a very high position and that therefore could not name him.
The Magistrate brought the charge of "disturbing the public peace by counter-revolutionary conversation, and against the Soviet Government's safety". He declared that I should be arrested again for it, but as the All-Russian "G. P. U." had already ordered me to leave S. S. S. R., he (the Magistrate) would make no objections to my leaving Petrograd.
I was released 4 hours before sailing. The charge was made in written form. Record was taken down.

Berlin, Jan. 7, 1925. (*Signed*) NADESCHDA PEREMESCHKO

MAXIM JOSSIFOVITCH MANDELSTAMM

(Escaped from Siberia in 1923)

1. Maxim Jossifovitch Mandelstamm.
2. Province of Novgorod, Russia, February, 1899.
3. 25 years.
4. Social-Democrat.
5. From 1913.
8. Since 1917—a) Five times; b) in 1918, March, at Sestroretzk; in 1922 in Petrograd; in 1923 in Orenburg (while in exile)—twice; in 1923 in Moscow. (Refers to arrests).
   In Sestroretzk I was arrested at the station after a lecture delivered to the Sestroretzk workmen. The arrest was made by order of the Soviet Executive and the *Tcheka*, although I was not shown any order to that effect.
   In Petrograd, in August 1922, I was arrested at 3.30 A. M. in my flat, by order of the Petrograd "G. P. U."
   In Orenburg, while in exile there, I was arrested on March 24 and on April 1, 1923, together with a group of socialist exiles, by order of the local "G. P. U." (See page 35.—Ed.)
   In Moscow I was arrested, in June 1923, at the flat of a friend where an ambush was set.
9. In Petrograd, in 1922, at the "G. P. U." (Prison in the Gorokhovaya), 3½ days until I was first examined.
   In Orenburg, I was not examined at all at the time of my first arrest (I was kept for a week); the second time an enquiry was held, just for formality sake, immediately after my apprehension I was sent out of Orenburg the very same day.
10. In Petrograd, in 1922, the accusation was produced at my first (and only) examination, under §57 and 72 of the Criminal Code (paragraphs repeated in the sentence).

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In Moscow, in 1923, I was verbally accused under §62 of the Criminal Code (repeated, later, in the sentence).
In Orenburg I was sentenced to be deported to Aktiubinsk. No reason was given and no reference to any paragraphs of the Code.

11. Between arrest and sentence:—in Petrograd, 1922—5 weeks; in Moscow—2 weeks.

12. I—Gorohovaya ("G.P.U.") and in the House of Preliminary Detentino; II—Lubyanka ("G. P. U.")

13. In Petrograd (1922)—3½ days in common cell of the "G. P. U."; after examination—9 days in solitary cell in the "G. P. U." (Gorohovaya)—a tiny, stuffy cage, without sunlight, dim electric lighting day and night (it was prohibited to switch the light out); the cell swarmed with parasites, Then followed 4 days of solitary confinement in a cell in the House of Preliminary Detention; the rest of the time—in a cell of the "political corridor". At the "G. P. U.", the prison food was not taken in by the inmates of the solitary cells, with the exception of bread (which was digestible); we lived on the food parcels brought from the outside. The political corridor had the so-called socialist ration.

Régime of the common room at the "G. P. U." (prison), stuffy, close and dirty; no walks (none permitted at the "G.P.U."); no letters were allowed; food and clothing parcels were allowed three times a week; no books or papers were allowed, nor was one permitted to have writing paper or other writing materials.

The same régime reigns in the solitary cells of the "G. P. U." —the prohibition to speak with neighbours, or, in general, to talk even were it with oneself. The walls of the cells in the Gorohovaya are very thin, so that any movement or conversation in the cells could be overheard in the corridor where the wardens are watching. The solitary regime in the house of Preliminary Detention is as strict: no books, no papers, no letters, no writing material, no walks, no visits. Food parcels can be received twice a week. The political corridor of the House of Preliminary detention enjoys a comparatively liberal régime (which was conquered after a stubborn struggle led by the Socialists). Walks—twice a day; books, newspapers, visits, "starosta" system. I took part, while in the House of Preliminary Detention, in two protest hunger-strikes. The first was declared in solidarity with demands put forward in connection with the conditions and reglementation of deportation, to which most of the political prisoners were sentenced. The strike lasted but one day, the "G. P. U." having conceded our demands. As it was later found out, the concession was a mere fraud. The second hunger-strike was in solidarity with a woman-prisoner—Socialist-Democrat—who demanded that her place of banishment be changed because of the weak state of

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her health. The "G. P. U." conceded the demand. (As to Gorohovaya and Shpalerka prisons see Part II.—Ed.)

In Moscow, in 1923, the régime of the "G. P. U." (Lubyanka) is a very harsh one: the cells are stuffy and close—from 3 to 10 persons per cell. No walks, no visits, no letters. Food is rather better than in ordinary prisons. Food parcels are allowed. The authorities and the wardens are quarrelsome and rude. No medical attendance whatever.

14. No. (Did you have a trial?).
15.
16.
17. In 1922—banishment to Orenburg province for 2 years.
In 1923—banishment to Narym for 3 years.
18. a) By administrative order of the "G. P. U." in the name of the Commission of Administrative Exile attached to the All- Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets.
b) In both cases the sentences were given in writing; I had to sign that I had read them.
c) The sentences contain the accusation under so and so, without giving any reasons whatever.
19. In the first place of exile—5 months in Orenburg; then I was exiled to the Aktiubinsk province.
In the second place of exile I was deported to a spot 500 odd versts from the nearest railway (a village in the Narym province).

In Orenburg, in March, 1923, when I was first arrested,* there was a collective protest against our being kept in prison: our demand was that an accusation should be produced; we also refused to leave for our various places of exile and refused to hand over the women-prisoners, as there was an attempt to take them away, relying on their being the weakest among us.

At the second arrest, on the night of April 1, we refused to enter the "G. P. U." cells until explanations would be given as to the cause of the arrest. "G .P. U." soldiers were called out: they attacked with their rifles a group of unarmed exiles, a third of whom were women. Then followed a brutal locking-in into the cells. Myself and two other exiles were immediately banished to Aktiubinsk.

20.
21. Escaped abroad from Siberia (in 1923).
22.

January 9, 1925 M. MANDELSTAMM.

* The arrest was carried out in connection with a party organized by the comrades to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

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PETER ADAMOVITCH DZEN

(Escaped to Finland May, 1922)

1. Peter Adamovitch Dzen.
2. Gatchina (Province of Petrograd), January 9 (o. s.) 1893.
3. 31 years.
4. Socialist-Revolutionist.
5. From 1911.
6.
7. (What arrests before 1917?)
   a) By order of the "Okhrana".
   b) Once.
   c) Three months' prison, expelled from the University and banished from University towns.
8. a) Six times. (Arrests since 1917).
   b) End of 1918 in Petrograd; February, 1919, in Petrograd; March, 1921, in Moscow; August, 1921, near Pskoff; September, 1921, on the way from Pskoff to Moscow; September, 1921, in Moscow.
   c) Five times in the daytime, by secret agents of the Tcheka without any order; once at home, at night, by order of the Moscow Tcheka.
9. Was immediately examined by the Petrograd Tcheka.
10. At the first examination—verbal accusation of having pronounced an opposition speech at a meeting. At the second and following examinations, no accusation was formulated. Was imprisoned simply as member of the Socialist-Revolutionist Party.
11. (How long in prison between arrest and sentence?) From Feb. 1919 to Dec. 1920.
12. Inner Prison of the Petrograd *Tcheka;* Butirky, Moscow; Yaroslav Hard Labor Prison; Moscow *Tcheka.*
13. At the Petrograd *Tcheka* I was kept for a week in a cellar (the so-called "cork" cell); then 1 month in the common cell with 200 other prisoners, the cell itself holding no more than 50. Then, in a common cell with criminals in the Butirky prison (Moscow, Ed.); after a collective obstruction, was transferred to the common political cell; then, solitary cell containing no table, broken window and no heating. And, lastly, in the Moscow *Tcheka,* in a common celler. (For additional with regard to the Gorohovaya and Shpalerka see Part II.—Ed.)

    Food: At the Petrograd *Tcheka*—¼ lb. of black bread and once soup with dried fish. Food parcels sent to me were confiscated by the Commandant. At Butirky—1 lb. of bread and twice soup. At Yaroslav—¾ lb. of bread (or 1 lb.—I am not sure) and once soup and herring and garden weeds and cabbage leaves. Evening supper—1 spoonful of thin buckwheat gruel.

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Treatment: At the Petrograd *T'cheka* I was coarsely insulted, at the first examination, by the Commandant (Galkin, I think, was his name) and was threatened that I would be shot on the spot (the muzzle of the revolver was placed to my head, then to the back of my neck: thus was I taken to the cellar).

At the Butirky, Moscow, the attitude of the authorities was exceptionally rude until April, 1919: complete uncontrolledness of the old Tzarist wardens. After the collective obstruction the behavior improved (transfer to the political cells, politeness). In the Yarcslav prison the régime was brutal: special guards and foreign wardens (Hungarians, Czechs, Germans), ceaseless threats to shoot, firing at windows at the slightest attempt to come near them, etc.

The régime of the Moscow *T'cheka* is brutal; the executioners. Maga and Ryba (both Letts), were the Chiefs of the prison.

Obstructions and protests: Protest obstruction of the Socialist-Revolutionists supported by the entire prison—noise, howl, smashing of windows and of doors. The demand was that the Commandant of the prison should come to talk over the question of the régime. The protest ceased owing to a systematic firing at the windows of the cells. The protest lasted a few hours. An improvement in the régime followed.

Winter 1919-1920: a six-day collective hunger-strike. Demands: the return to Butirky of the Left Socialist-Revolutionist leaders who had been carried away by swindle. They were brought back. As it was found out, they were hidden in one of the old towers of the prison(the one in which Pugatcheff† was kept) where they were submitted to moral tortures. I also participated in the collective protest-obstruction during the transfer to the Yaroslav prison. Was cruelly beaten when resisting transfer.

14. No relation whatever to any shadow of a trial.
15.
16.
17.
18. No trial and no verdict. Was kept without any term being fixed.
19.
20.
21. Escaped across the Finnish border in May, 1922 (illegally, afoot, through woods).
22. My sisters were repeatedly arrested, because of me. In Feb., 1919, my sisters, Antonina, aged 24, and Mary, aged 19, were arrested at the same time as I was. They were released a few weeks later. Antonina contracted typhoid fever in prison and died after re-

†Leader of a Cossack revolt against Catherine the Great.

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lease. In the beginning of 1922 Mary and my sister Vera, aged 19, were again arrested and released after a few weeks imprisonment. No accusations were brought forth. They were "making inquiries" about their brother (i.e. about myself).

January 10, 1925. PETER DZEN.

I. Z. STEINBERG

(Exiled forever in 1923)

(Commissioner of Justice under the Bolshevik Government until April, 1918)

1. Isaak Zakharevitch Steinberg.
2. In the City of Dvinsk, July 13, 1888.
3. 36 years of age.
4. Member of Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party.
5. Since the founding of the same, in October, 1917.
6. Before that, since 1906, was a member of the Socialist-Revolutionist Party.
7. Persecution before 1917:
   a) Arrests, searches, exile.
   b) Twice.
   c) In March, 1907, imprisoned for Party activity in Moscow; sentenced administratively to three years' in Siberia; changed to exile abroad for two years. In January, 1915, arrested as the editor of the Narodnik publication, "Nasha Zhizn", in Moscow. (Narodnik, People's Party. "Nasha Zizn" means "Our Life". Ed.)
8. Persecution since 1917:
   a) Twice. Was subjected to searches at home 22 times (twenty-two).
   b) The first time, in February, 1919, when the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionists was for the second time suppressed totally by the Bolsheviki.

Hundreds of comrades were arrested on that occasion, on the sensational charge of "Conspiracy of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists against the Soviet Power." I was arrested by order of the *Vetcheka* (All-Russian *Tcheka*) at 12 o'clock at night, as I was leaving the meeting at which I had been a speaker.

The second time I was arrested in the beginning of 1922 at my home, late at night. The *Vetcheka* magistrate, Andreeva, (a woman. Ed.) declared to me that I was arrested as hostage for M. Spiridonova, who was supposed to have escaped that day from house-arrest.

*The signature of Peter Dzen is certified by a Public Notary in Helsingfors, Finland.

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9. No examination.
10. No charge brought.
11. The first time I was liberated after four and a half months. The second time, the same night, when it became known that Spiridonova did not escape.
12. The time in the Butirky Prison (Moscow.—Ed.), the second time in the "inner" prison of the *Vetcheka*.
13. The food in 1919 was extremely poor. There were no hunger strikes, but in the month of May of the same year 10 Left Socialist-Revolutionists were forcibly taken, beaten, and transferred to Lefortov Prison. Due to the very severe conditions of that prison, a number of our comrades (Karelin, Prokopovitch, Shabal'n, Kronik) acquired consumption, bowel troubles, and other diseases. Comrade Lev Efimovitch Kronik (who was Assistant People's Commissar of Postal Telegraph Service in the first Soviet Govment) died three years afterwards from a cruel form of consumption acquired in this prison.
14. No trial.
15. No defense counsel.
16. Not known to me.
17. There was no sentence.
18. There was none. (Sentence. Ed.)
19.
20. I received permission to go abroad, in 1923, to participate in the work of the Vienna International, on which occasion the Central Executive Committee (of the Government. Ed.) declared that my departure is "forever".
21. No. (As to escape).

Berlin, December 4, 1924. Signed) DR. ISAAK STEINBERG.

SERGEI S. GAN

(Escaped Abroad, Sept., 1924)

1. Sergei Stanislavovitch Gan (Kasyanov, Pogod'n).
2. Village Yalovka, Volkovisski County, Province Grodno.
3. 29 years of age.
4. In 1916 belonged to the Socialist-Revolutionist Party. Now belong to Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party (Internationalists).
5. Joined from the time the Party of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists was founded November, 1917.
6. Was arrested by the Temporary Government on the 21st of July, 1917, in Petrograd, for anti-militarist propaganda.
7. a) Arrested (by the Bolsheviki) 4 times.
   b) In Tcherepovts, August 15, 1918. In Moscow, August 16, 1919. In Tambov, September 21, 1920. In Moscow, August 27, 1921.

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c) Time of first arrest, at 4 at night, on the street, without warrant being shown. The second time, taken by 4 agents of the *Vetcheka* at 5 P. M. in the Sokolnikov Park, without any warrant. The third time arrested at 10 A. M. at a *zassada** in the house of a party comrade. The fourth time arrested by a company of the "G. P. U." soldiers consisting of 200 men with machine guns. The last two times, revolvers were the warrants shown.

8. On the occasion of the first arrest, I was examined on the second day. On the second arrest, the same day. Third arrest, I remained in the prison of the Tambov *Tcheka* 4 (four) months before getting a hearing. On the fourth occasion I spent 11 (eleven) months in the Butirky Prison, the Moscow *Tcheka* Prison, and the Taganka Prison before coming up for an examination (before the court).
9. Charges were preferred orally, at the examination, for belonging to the active workers of the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionist. On the last occasion, July 18, 1922, I was given the charge in written form.
10. The total length of time I was kept in communist prisons amounts to 4 years and 15 days. Continuous imprisonment from the day of my arrest in Tambov, November 21,† 1920, till June 29, 1922—the sentence of the Supreme Tribunal—and then till my liberation on December 18, 1925 totals 3 years, 2 months, and 18 days.
11. I passed through the following prisons:
    1) In the Tcherepov Provincial Prison, 8 days;
    2) In the Petrograd *Tcheka*—Gorohovaya, 2—10 days;
    3) In the Petr.-Pavlovsk Fortress, 14 days;
    4) In the Kronstadt Maritime Prison, 7 days;
    5) In Moscow—*Vetcheka*—(on Lubianka No. 11) 1½ months;
    6) In the Moscow Butirky, 11 months;
    7) In the Tambov Provincial *Tcheka*, 5 months;
    8) In the Yaroslav (former katorga), 1 months;
    9) In the Moscow Taganka, 5 months;
    10) In the Lefortov Prison (Moscow), 11 months;
    11) Inner Prison of the "G. P. U.", 2 months;
    12) Inner Prison of the Moscow Branch of the "G. P. U.", on the Kisselny, 4 months;
    13) In the Tcheliabinsk Political Isolator, 6½ months.
12. The conditions of imprisonment in the first 4 places, during the time of the highest development of red terror, were very hard.

*Police trap.

†By context it appears that there is an error here and that he means September 21, 1920. Compare 7. b. The Editor has not had opportunity to have Mr. Gan make this and other minor corrections in his affidavit. Mr. Gan was in Czechoslovakia when he made this affidavit.

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There neither were books, exercise, visits, nor a definitely-settled ration. But these conditions are not characteristic of the "normal prison regime", because at that time the prisoner was happy if he was not immediately shot. . . . There could be no talk then of collective or individual struggle for improvement of prison conditions of life.

The conditions of my imprisonment in the *Veh-Tcheka* prison were: solitary confinement in a cell without windows and even without a loophole; the electric burned the whole day and night; food: for dinner and supper soup, and half a pound of bread. Exercise, books, newspapers, or receiving packages not permitted. The treatment by the keepers, the notorious executioners of the *Tcheka* (Mago, Ryba, Berzin) was correct, though in conversation they frequently hinted that I should be "put in circulation" (shot. tr.). After 2½ months of imprisonment I declared a hunger strike (on Oct. 2, 1919) with the demand that I be either shot or placed in normal prison conditions. After 3 days of my hunger strike they guaranteed to me that one of my demands would be granted within a week. After a second srtike of two days they transferred me to the Butirky Prison, into the general cell (Number 59, Twelfth Corridor) which was filled with members of the Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party. The conditions in which we lived were: entire absence of rights on the part of the prisoners; coarse behavior of the keepers, and cells locked. Feeding: one pound of bread, soup of frozen potatoes or of rotten fish; for supper lentils, and all of it in small quantities.

On November 27th there took place an obstruction by the Left Socialist-Revolutionists, and from November 30th till December 6th a general hunger strike, which resulted in some of our demands being satisfied. (The details are described in conformance with the actuality in the "Kremlin Behind Bars").

On February 20, 1920, we were—62 Left Socialist-Revolutionists, literally dragged out by *Tchekists* from the Butirky Prison at 5 A. M., crowded us into a Stolypin car (railroad car built by Stolypin for prisoners. Tr.) and transferred us to various Ural prisons. I, together with 16 others, was placed in the Tcheliabinsk Provincial *Tcheka* prison, whence I escaped together with 6 other comrades, on April 12, under the leadership of the local Anarchist Tikhon Kashirin, who was later shot by the R. C. P. together with Lev Tchorny.

From Sept. 21 (1920—.Ed.), till Feb., 1921, I was imprisoned in the prison of the Tambov Gov. *Tcheka*. At first in a general cell with 80 persons. Slept under the benches, then on bare boards, like the other arrested peasants who had been jailed for their sympathy and aid to the partizan movement. Ration: half a

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pound of bread; for dinner lentel soup, and that's all. There were almost no protests, because the least insubordination was punished by beating. Thus, among the Socialists, the 17-year girl, Nina Lavrova, was flogged with ramrods because she refused answer at her examination. Other Socialist women were compelled to wash the floors in the Commendatura, and us (the men) they drove to hard labor in the city, giving us for it an additional ration of half a pound of bread a day.

Beginning with February 10, 1921, I was imprisoned in Moscow in the inner prison of the *Vetcheka*. The regime was very severe: no books, visits, or exercise, even to play chess or checkers was forbidden. The cells locked; the excrement bucket remaining in the cell the entire 24 hours; talking in the cell only in subdued voice.

From March 11—in the Butirky Prison. The condition of the Socialists was a privileged one: exercise 12 hours a day; cells open, books, newspapers. But in the latter part of April there took place a general hunger strike of the non-Socialist elements of the prison, who made the following demands: to hasten their cases; to release the innocent, and for those remaining in prison the same treatment as the Socialists received. In the hunger strike there participated about 3,000 persons. On the third day of the strike there began an obstruction on a huge scale: howling of the prisoners, the striking of metal plates against the bars, hysterics by the women. . . . The Moscow *Tcheka* and the representatives of the Moscow Soviet satisfied, by word, all the demands of the prisoners, after 2½ hours of the obstruction.

On the night of April 25-26 all the Socialists (about 300 persons) were transferred to provincial prisons. The transfer was accompanied by the beating of almost every one of them. These facts have since become known through the Socialist and Anarchist press of Europe, but I witnessed from the window of the hospital how the *Tchekists* dragged by the hair two women Socialists from the female Solitary Department and across the prison yard—Ephosinia Kormilitsina (Left Socialist-Revolutionist) and Tanya (?) a non-partisan Socialist. Us—a party of 26 sick persons—they carried out on their hands from the Butirky hospital, after all the others, and took us to the Yaroslav *katorga* prison, which is now called the "People's House of Deprivation of Liberty". (See page 134.—Ed.)

The Elders of the common prisoners, who organized the obstruction, 3 persons, were shot in the first days of May. (1921.—Ed.)

In the Yaroslav prison we were subjected to an exceptional regime in punishment for the "resistance to the agents of the

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Vetcheka during the transfer." During a whole month we were kept on "a general-criminal regime", a regime, at that—by special order of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. A small ration, deprivation of correspondence and visits of relatives, no medical aid even for the sick. Later on the condition of the imprisoned Socialists was improved, but I did not get the benefit of it, because I was again transferred to Moscow—to the Socialist Wing of the Taganka Prison. The conditions of imprisonment there were more or less endurable: the cells, large, exercise several hours a day, the chance to use the Library and to have visits. The rationing was poor, but after we threatened to have a hunger strike (during the arrival of the Anarchist and Syndicalist delegates from Europe and America to participate in the Congress of the Red Labor Unions) the authorities compromised and gave us a ration of 3,200 calories. The only abnormal thing was that the "Socialist" kitchen and the lavatory were at the same place.

A serious protest against the very principle of keeping hostages of the Left elements was the hunger strike of the Anarchists (Volin, Mratchny, Yartchuk, and others) which lasted 11 days—the first long-term hunger strike of political prisoners. It ended comparatively a success, as is well known: the comrades were released, but deported abroad.

Since September 1, 1921, I was imprisoned in the Butirky. The regime there was bearable. Besides a number of sudden searches, most of them at night, there were but two cases of forcible transfer of two Socialist Democrats into exile, of the Anarchist Tcherniak (who hunger-struck 14 days) to the hospital. (See his letter on page 157.—Ed.) All the Anarchists and Socialists in that prison had internal autonomy. The ration at first (about 3 months), the general prison one, then before the trial of the Central Commission of the Socialist-Revolutionist Party, it grew to a sanitary one. Exercise 2 hours a day.

During my time there took place two more hunger strikes: the 6-day hunger strike of the Mensheviki (38 persons) in February, 1922, against the system of hostages, with the demand of a trial or liberation. It ended by some being sent abroad (Dan, Nikolayevsky, Stoilo, Litkens, Iugow, etc.), while others were sent to Viatka and Veliki-Ustiug. And the 9-day hunger strike of the Socialist-Revolutionist Lvov, in protest against the arrest and beating of his wife after her visit to him. He demanded that she be sent to the Burtirky Hospital.

End of February we were transferred (the Anarchists and Left Socialist Revolutionists) to the inner prison of the Moscow Dept. of the "G. P. U." (on the Kisselny Pereulok). There took place our Left Socialist-Revolutionist hunger strike of 9 days—

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from April 1 to April 9, 1922, with the demand that all imprisoned Left Socialist-Revolutionists (Internationalists) be either liberated or sent abroad. (Details are published in "Kremlin Behind the Bars").

Of the 42 persons that participated in that hunger strike, a good number were deported. Six persons, after a repeated hunger of 9 days, were freed in July, 1922, and sent to their native places. That was a group of White Russian peasants: Bedaev, Martinovsky, Bogdanov, Azartchenko, Borovkov. The Supreme Tribunal refused to try them. The "G. P. U." found it possible to free them after the second hunger strike.

13. a) I was tried by the Supreme Tribunal S. S. S. R. in Moscow, June 27-29, 1922.

b) The court consisted of a Collegium of three members of the R. C. P.;* Soltz, member of the Central Committee, R. C. P.; Meren and Kronberg, all three intellectuals.

c) Defence was permitted. It was supplied by the Political Red Cross,† after the defenders selected by us (comrades Steinberg and Bakkal) were declined by the Tribunal.

d) There is a written record of the sessions of the Tribunal (published in its entirety almost in the "Puti Revolutsii", Skythen, Berlin, 1923).

15. a) In the Moscow Lefortov Prison 11 months, and in the Tcheliabinsk Political Isolater 6½ months.

b) During my stay in Lefortov there were no hunger strikes. There were two obstructions. One was after the search in connection with the beating up of our Left Socialist-Revolutionist comrade Ivan I. Ivanov, a workingman in the Putilov factory. He was beaten by the agents of the "G. P. U." because he swallowed some piece of paper instead of giving it to them.

The second obstruction of resistance was organized by the Anarchists and Socialists when the Socialist-Revolutionist V. D. Shishkin was about to be taken to execution, in September, 1922. During three days we resisted the taking away of our comrade by barricading the cells at night. After a week he was taken by a ruse when he had a visit from his old mother in the office of the prison. True, after 2 weeks his death sentence was commuted to 10-years of katorga (hard labor.—Ed.)

Besides these 2 obstructions, the ".G P. U." brought three times detachments of soldiers into the prison building. 1) In September, in order to transfer the Siberian Socialist-Revolutionists who awaited examination, to the inner prison. (2) In October (1922—Ed.), to take the remaining Socialist-Revolu-

*Russian Communist Party.
†Mme. Peshkova's Organization for Relief of Politicals.

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tionists, who waited examination, to the "inner" prison. The bringing in of the military was regarded by the chiefs of the "G. P. U." as a "measure of prevention of possible excesses." 3) The third time the Army men were placed at our cell for two days: 50 armed soldiers against 9 prisoners, in order to carry out the order of Krilenko regarding the closing of the cells during the entire day.

In the last days of May, 1923, I and B. D. Kamkov were called to the prison office at 2 P. M., where we were fallen upon by the agents of the "G. P. U.", thrown into an automobile and carried to the Tcheliabinsk Political Isolater. There the politicals carried out two hunger strikes for the improvement of the régime: a 6-day strike in the beginning of June, and a 7-day strike in November, 1923. Details have been given by me to the Committee of Defense. (See Gan's affidavit, page 124).

17. I emigrated abroad by instruction of the Party organization, on September 1, 1924. I crossed the Polish frontier illegally, at night, aided by the local peasants. Cannot give more details about this matter, for conspirative reasons.

18. Comparing the conditions of imprisonment today with those of 2 or 3 years back, it is necessary to say the following: under the system of "hostages en masse"—of Socialists responsible for the future of the Party—the majority of us were imprisoned without knowing at what day or minute we might be liberated or shot. But now the majority of Socialists and Anarchists are sentenced to definite terms. The sentences are by the Tribunal (no more than 10 per cent of the entire number) or by the "G. P. U.", to prison or concentration camp. True, the termination of one's sentence guarantees no one from being immediately arrested again and exiled . . . for 2, 3 years to the little populated places of Siberia and Turkestan. In 1924 such exiles of persons whose terms had expired took place directly from the prison.

(*Signed*) SERGEI GAN.

February 5, 1925
City of Prague Czechoslovakia.

ILJA BAKKAL

(Deported Abroad forever Sept., 1922)

1. Ilja Bakkal.
2. October 2, 1893.
3. 31 years of age.
4. Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party.
5. Since October, 1917.

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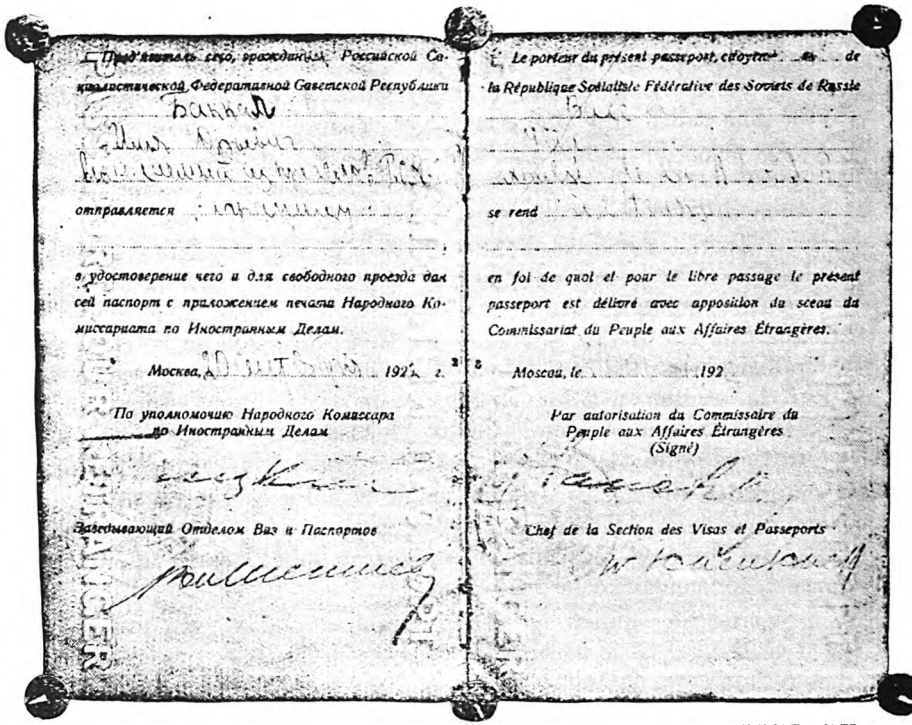

Предъявитель сего, гражданин Российской Социалистической Федеративной Советской Республики

отправляется

в удостоверение чего и для свободного проезда дан сей паспорт с приложением печати Народного Комиссариата по Иностранным Делам.

Москва, 192 г.

По уполномочию Народного Комиссара по Иностранным Делам

Заведывающий Отделом Виз и Паспортов

Le porteur du présent passeport, citoyen de la République Socialiste Fédérative des Soviets de Russie

se rend

en foi de quoi et pour le libre passage le présent passeport est délivré avec apposition du sceau du Commissariat du Peuple aux Affaires Étrangères.

Moscou, le 192

Par autorisation du Commissaire du Peuple aux Affaires Étrangères (Signé)

Chef de la Section des Visas et Passeports

PHOTO OF PASSPORT PAGE OF ILJA BAKKAL EXPELLED BY THE BOLSHEVIKI FROM RUSSIA

6. Till the organization of the Left Social'st-Revolutionist Party, in October, 1917, I was a member of the Socialist Revolutionist Party since 1913.
7. a) Before 1917.
   b) Arrested twice.
8. Arrested 6 times by the Soviet Government. One time by the Whites.
   b) By the Whites, arrested in the City of Berdiansk, in 1918. By the Soviet Government in Kiev, in 1919; in Kharkov twice: both times in 1920, and three times in Moscow: in 1920, 1921 and in 1922.
   c) In Kiev by an agent of the *Tcheka*. In Kharkov, the first time, at our Party Conference (legal Conference of the Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party. The whole Conference arrested).
   The second time in a railroad train, by an agent of the *Tcheka*, without showing a warrant.
   In Moscow (arrested) at my home, late at night.
9. In three cases I had no hearing at all. In the other three cases was examined by a *Tcheka* magistrate at different times.

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10. In four cases there was no charge presented. In the fifth case charge was made two months later (after the arrest) in the secret wing of the Kharkov Prison. In the last, sixth case, there was a decision to deport me from the confines of R. S. F. S. R., after one month's imprisonment in the "inner" prison of the "G .P. U.", in Moscow, Lubianka Street No. 2.
11. Sentence of "G. P. U." to depart—one month after my arrest, in September, 1922. In the other cases I was liberated without a sentence, after imprisonments of 2 days to 5 months.
12. Imprisoned in the Kiev *Tcheka*, Kharkov *Tcheka*, and in the "secret wing' of the Kharkov Prison; in the Moscow *Tcheka*, in the "inner" prison of the *Vetcheka* and then in the "G. P. U." in Moscow.
13. In Kiev, in the cellar of the *Tcheka* (in a "general" cell. That is, in a cell with other people.—Ed.)

    In Kharkov, in the cellar of the *Tcheka*, "general" cell. Also in solitary in prison.

    In Moscow, in a "general" cell and in a *Tcheka* solitary.

    In the Kharkov Prison 3 (three) collective hunger strikes (30 persons).

    The first time (hunger strike) one day. The second time. 3 days—demanding that a charge be made. The third time, 7 days, for liberation.
16. Record of the examinations by the *Tcheka* magistrates are to be found in the *Tcheka.*
17. There was no court sentence. Sentenced by the Collegium of the "G. P. U." in contumaciam (in my absence).
18. Sentenced by the Collegium of the "G. P. U."

    b) In written form. Was read to me, but not given into my hands.

    c) Approximately it read: "Taking into consideration that within 5 years you have not made peace with Soviet Power, and in particularly difficult time for the latter you intensified your work against it (coming under Articles—punishable with death or with ten years of prison), etc.
19. After the sentence I was sent out, within one week, from R. S. F. S. R.

    b) A protest against my deportation was sent to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee (of the Government) by the Central Bureau of the Left Socialist-Revolutionist Party.

    About hunger strikes see Number 13.
20. On August, 1922, (on the night of August 16-17) there were arrested in Moscow several scores of representatives of the intelligentsia (in no political connection with each other)—professors, journalists, cooperators (members of the cooperatives.—Ed.) and others.

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To all a similar charge was presented (see Number 18-b) and they were all sent out of R. S. F. S. R. for ever.

From me a written promise was taken (I don't know about the others) not to return to Russia; in case I do so, I am subject to be shot.

(*Signed*) I. BAKKAL.

November 27, 1924, Berlin.

A. M. FELDMAN

(Deported Abroad January, 1922)

1. Abram Moiseevitch Feldman.
2. Bessarabia, March 10, 1884.
3. 41 years of age.
4. Anarchist.
5. Since 1905.
6. Till 1905 was a Socialist-Revolutionist. Joined Anarchist movement in Kiev, in 1905.
7. Arrested three times in 1906, and in 1907 sentenced to death for participation in the mutiny of the Forty-first Selidinski regiment. in 1905, in Kiev. Death sentence commuted to *katorga* (hard labor) for 18 years. After 4 years in Irkutsk, I escaped, finally reaching America. Returned to Russia in June, 1917, and went to Bessarabia.
8. Since October 1917, I was arrested repeatedly (imprisonment being of short duration) for Anarchist propaganda. Particularly in Odessa I was arrested many times, together with other Anarchists. At no time were any charges made against me, my protests receiving the reply from *Tchekists*. "You're an Anarchist—that is enough."

   In October, 1920. I was arrested in Moscow at an Anarchist lecture. There was no charge made, and after a while I was released.

   After that I was arrested repeatedly by the *Tcheka* in Moscow —taken at home, on the street, in the Anarchist club, sometimes by day, often at night. At no time was there any order for these arrests, except that now and then there was a *general order* of the *Tcheka* to arrest all Anarchists. I was generally kept several weeks in prison, but sometimes even months.

   The last time I was arrested in Moscow in the spring of 1921, in the Anarchist club, at night, on a general order of the All-Russian *Tcheka* for arrest of Anarchists. No charge was made against me. In the *Vetcheka* (All-Russian *Tcheka*) they threatened me with shooting. Then the *Vetcheka* sentenced me—with-

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out any hearing—to be kept in prison till "the close of the civil war." Later the *Vetcheka* again sentenced me — also without a hearing—to 3 years prison. That sentence was not carried out because of the hunger-strike declared by me (together with other Anarchists) in the Taganka Prison (Moscow) in July, 1921, which finally resulted in our deportation from Russia.

9. Only once—of all these arrests—I was called for something like a "hearing" by the *Tcheka* Magistrate in the Butirky prison (Moscow). But I refused to hold any conversation with the *Tchekist* executioner. This took place several weeks after my arrest and after a 9-day hunger-strike for the purpose of having a charge brought against me.
10. At no time was there any charge made against me, either orally or in writing. The only answer I generally received was: "Feldman, you are an Anarchist. That's why you were arrested."
11. As mentioned in my reply to question 8, I was sentenced after my last arrest (1921) to 3 years' prison *as an Anarchist*, after several months of imprisonment.
12. I was kept in various prisons in Moscow—in the special ("inner") *Tcheka* prison, in Butirky and Taganka. The last time, I was in Taganka prison.
13. Conditions in the prisons were bad: dampness, in the winter, cold. The prisons were either not heated at all or insufficiently, with the exception of the "Special *Tcheka* Prison".

    The feeding was bad.

    The treatment of the politicals, myself included, on the part of the *Tchekists* was coarse and brutal. The prison guards and soldiers behaved toward us as they used to under the old régime.

    I myself resorted to repeated protests, thus:

a) In the special *Tcheka* prison, in October, 1920. In reply to my protest, the *Tchekist* Dukis entered my cell with a revolver and threatened to shoot me. My cries attracted the attention of other politicals, and the protest became a collective one, finally culminating in a 9-day hunger strike. As a result of the latter we were transferred to the Butirky Prison.

b) In the spring of 1922—after the arrest at night in the club (see reply No. 8) I declared a hunger-strike as a protest, on the 6th day of which I resorted to "obstruction" demolishing the furniture, windows, etc.

I was bound hand and foot and transferred to the Taganka Prison, where I continued the hunger-strike for an additional 7 days, demanding my liberation.

On the 13th day of hunger-strike, almost unconscious (a doctor was stationed in my cell), I was taken to the prison hospital where I was forcibly fed by means of milk injections.

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c) Later, from July 4-14, 1921, I participated in the Anarchist hunger-strike in Tanganka Prison (the 10-day collective hunger-strike of the 13 Anarchists). That hunger-strike terminated in the scandal at the Congress of Red Trade Unions (Moscow), 1921, and the deportation of 10 Anarchists abroad. (See Part IV. Ed.)

After that hunger-strike, we were still kept 2 months in prison (till Sept. 17), constantly aggravated by the administration, in the hope of provoking us into some action that would offer an excuse to break their promise of deportation.

14. Never had any hearing or trial (See 8, 9, 10 and 11).
15. See 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14.
16. See above. If the *Vetcheka* had made any "protocols", the latter were without my signature.
17. See 8 and 11.
18. See 8 and 11. The sentence of the *Vetcheka* was brought to me in written form in the Taganka. It read: "For 3 years prison as an Anarchist".

    I declined to recognize or sign that sentence because it was pronounced without my presence and without trial.
19. See No. 13.
20. In addition to No. 13. Upon my release from Taganka (Sept. 17, 1921) the Bolshevik authorities in every way sought to postpone and nullify the promised deportation abroad of myself and the other 9 comrades.

    In the Petrograd Hotel where we were lodged awaiting deportation, I was arrested on some pretext, but soon freed and finally deported (Jan. 5, 1922). On that occasion I was deprived of the receipt given me by a watchmaker (where my silver watch with gold chain was in repairs)—the gift of a comrade. In spite of the promise of the *Tcheka*, they never returned to me either the receipt or the watch.
22. Remark to No. 13. During my hunger-strike and "obstruction" in the special ("inner") *Tcheka* prison, I was held together with Tikhon Kashirin, Borodin Seliakow, Ivan Yelisev, and Lydia Surkova. On that occasion Kashirin was cruelly beaten—on the sixth day of the hunger-strike — and transferred to Butirky Prison.

Berlin, Jan. 7th 1925 ABRAHAM FELDMAN

MOISEI G. WAISBEIN
(1924)

1. Moisel Gershevitz Waisbein.
2. Born in Odessa, November 14, 1897.

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3. 27 years old.
4. Member of the Zionist Socialist Party (till 1920, known as the "Zeire Zion.")
5. Since 1915.
6. No change.
8. Arrests made 1917).
   a) Arrested several times. Repeatedly looked for.
   b) In November, 1918, in Odessa—by the Hetman Government.
   In March, 1921, in Odessa, by the Soviet Government.
   In January, 1922, in Kharkov, by the Soviet Government.
   In February, 1923, in Kiev, by the Soviet Govenment.
   c) In March, 1921, (arrested) at the gathering in our Party Club, which existed legally. The Club was after that closed.
   In January, 1922, at the Conference, by order of the All-Ukraine *Tcheka.* (Extraordinary Commission.)
   In February, 1923, in Kiev, upon my returning from a journey in connection with my employment. At 6 in the morning I found the "G. P. U." official who had been waiting for me since the previous evening—waiting for me and my room-mate. The order (of arrest) was only for my room-mate, but in spite of my protest I was arrested. The official remained in the house 5 or 6 additional days, in order to capture any visitors. On that occasion was arrested and held a week in the "G. P. U." a student accidentally entering the house.
9. Was examined on the 4th day, and there were no more examinations.
10. There was presented to me for perusal and signature the "decision of the official (magistrate) of the "G. P. U." to hold me on the basis of Articles 72 and 103 of the Criminal Code. Article 72 refers to the distribution of "illegal counter-revolutionary literature"—into that category, it seems, was placed the typed brochure found during my arrest and which dealt with the activities of the Palestine Labor Bank.

    Article 103 (of the Criminal Code) refers to membership (participation) in a society or party whose statutes are not registered.

    No reasons whatever were given nor any evidence (facts) supporting the charge (against me). They did not give into my hands a copy of the decision. When, after two and a half months, I was told my sentence, it became evident that I was not condemned on the basis of Article 72 and 103, but on Articles 61, 72, and 105 of the Criminal Code.

    I protested that I was not informed of the actual charge against me, whereupon the magistrate told me that the Articles

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were changed without his knowledge and therefore he could not inform me of it.

Article 61 deals with membership (participation) in counter-revolutionary organizations whose aim is to aid the international bourgeoisie and to help the same in intervention—I do not remember the exact reading of the Article, but its essence I reproduce correctly. Just in what was seen my cooperation with the international bourgeoisie, the magistrate was not able to point out to me.

11. (Remained in prison) two and a half months, after which the sentence was announced to me and the time set for my departure into exile.
12. In the Kiev Lukianov Prison, in the wing over which the "G. P. U." has charge.
13. In the cells of the "G. P. U."—full of filth and lice.
    In the Lukianov Prison satisfactory cleanliness. Food: twice a day, boiled water without tea; instead of dinner and supper—a bowl of thin soup, one pound of black bread. Those not receiving *peredatchi* (supplies of food from friends on the outside) cannot long hold out under such a regime.
14. Never was I before any court.
15. Was not permitted to have defense counsel.
16. (Record of proceedings) non-existent.
17. "To be sent abroad for 5 years. Till the receipt of a visum to be sent to Vologodsk Government for three years, with the right of departure abroad."
    a) Sentenced By the Commission on Administrative Exile, of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairss of R. S. F. S. R., in Moscow.
    b) Received my sentence in written form.
    c) Without assigning any cause.
19. Till my departure abroad I spent 9 months in exile in the City of Vologda.
20. For 5 years, by the decision of the Commission of P. C. I. A. (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)—the decision dated March 30, 1923.

Charlottenburg, January 5, 1925. (Signed) MOSES WAISBEIN

M. L. LECHTMAN
(1924)

1. Moisel Isaakovitch Lechtman.
2. City of Vinnitsa, Podolsk Province, in 1897.
3. 28 years.
4. Zionist Socialist Party.
5. Since 1916.

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6. No. (change).
7. No (Before 1917) arrest.
8. a) Twice: On September 21, 1922, in Kiev at my home, and on
   b) March 13, 1924, in Moscow at the house of a comrade at the session of the Central Committee of our Party.
   c) At 4 A. M., by the order of the Chief of the Secret Bureau of the Kiev "G. P. U." the order was shown, and at 11 P. M., by personal order of the magistrate in the cases of our Party. The order for the arrest was made later.
9. 1) The first examination (filling out a questionaire) took place during the night of the arrest in the prison of the Kiev Province *Tcheka*. The first hearing also there, on the 20th day.
   2) Till the first hearing was kept in the Butirky (Moscow).
10. 1) Was presented in written form during the examination—membership in an illegal, anti-Soviet organization.
   2) Was presented in written form, on basis of Article 61, two weeks after the arrest—"membership in an anti-Soviet Zionist organization."
11. 1) Between arrest and liberation—23 days; freed by giving written pledge not to leave, which was annulled after 3 months.
   2) Between arrest and sentence—2 months. Freed after one month following the sentence, with the order to leave S. S. S. R. within two weeks.
12. 1) In the inner prison of the Kiev Province *Tcheka*.
   2) Two days in the "dog house"—a room for those "held" by the "G. P. U." Two days in the preliminary detention of "G. P. U." The rest of the time in the Butirky (Moscow).
13. 1) In the prison of the Kiev Province *Tcheka*—once a day hot food; red beets without meat (or sup), and twice a day, morning and evening, boiled water. Once a day to the toilet—that constituted also exercise. In the living room 18-25 persons. Treatment coarse.
   2) In the "dog house" there are in the living room 40-50 persons. Benches only for 19-15 persons; the rest sleep on the floor. The place is cleaned.

In the Butirky Prison we were the first two months together with the criminals on a criminal regime. Food: for dinner *shtchi* (thick soup made of cabbage) or soup with foul meat or fish, for supper *kasha* (gruel), 3 times a day boiled water, one pound of bread per day, 3 times to the toilet. Papers we were allowed to buy only at first; later it was forbidden; books can be had once a week from the prison library—in bad order, with ancient books, almost without even Soviet publications. To get books from the outside is forbidden.

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On April 8 and 9 there was a hunger strike in the Butirky, initiated by the (common) criminals with the following demands: improvement of their position—separation of those awaiting trial from those already condemned, increase of time for exercise, better food, the right of having a group representative (starosta) and so forth.

On the 9th the hunger strike turned into obstruction; there began howling which continued from noon till ten in the evening. At 1 o'clock at night there were brought into the prison a detachment of the soldiers of Special Appointment, and "execution" began. (Thus it was called later by the prisoners). . . . . All prisoners were driven into the corridor, barefoot and in their night clothes, they were put face to the wall, were cursed and threatened with shooting, and the "leaders" were picked out by pointers given by the soldiers. (The soldiers could in no way see the leaders, and therefore they pointed out by mere guessing, at which they would say, "That one with the eye-glasses," or "that one, the curly one" and so on.) The "leaders" were put into the dungeon. All the others were punished in the cells. The cells were transformed for three days into close confinement, and the prisoners received only one quarter of a pound of bread and one cup of water daily. All the things (clothing) were taken from the cells during that time, and the prisoners remained only in their underwear. The whole prison was declared to be under martial law.

After 3 days, all persons in those *kameras* (cells, rooms) were deprived of exercise for one week, visits for a month, receipts of food packages for two weeks, to send letters during a month. (As we learned later, letters were not forwarded anyhow). In our own corridor there was no beating of prisoners. In the upper corridor (the 17th) all the things were taken out of the cells, the prisoners left in their underwear only and then were subjected to a stream of water from the fire pipe (the stream sent through the *voltchok*, that is, the little observation hole in the cell door). In the female department the women were dragged by the hair through the corridor and to the dungeon.

After the term of dungeon was over (3 days) the adminstration passed along the cells, inquiring whether there were any "complaints." They promised to investigate any complaints, but there was no response.

After this incident there was the demand that all prisoners stand at their doors for the morning and evening count.

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14, 15,16—No. (Question as to whether affiant had trial, counsel or whether there was any record of his case).

17. (Sentence) Three years to the concentration camp, with the right of leaving for Palestine ports, in case the prisoner should petition for it.

18. (Sentence) By the Special Conference of the General "G. P. U." in written form, on the strength of Article 61, membership in an anti-Soviet Zionist-Socialist group.

19. One month in the Butirky Prison, on a political regime.

20. Concentration camp changed to permission to leave for Palestine. After my receipt of visa to Palestine, freed on condition of leaving S. S. S. R. within two weeks.

21, 22. No.

December 30, Tel-Aviv, Palestine. (Signed) M. LECHTMAN
(1924—Ed.)

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Irina Kachovskaya

Alexandra Izmailovitch

Maria Spiridonova

Ekaterina Bulatova

Lea Gottman

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MARIA SPIRIDONOVA—In 1906 committed an attentat against the notorious peasant flogger, General Lukhomsky. Tortured and exiled to Siberia for life. Her name is the symbol of revolutionary martyrdom. Released by the Revolution of 1917. Arrested in 1918 by the Bolsheviki, as a member of the Left Social Revolutionists. In prison ever since, except short respites of "freedom". In the last stages of consumption. Is now 36 years of age, having spent over half her life in prison. See page 71 et seq.

ALEXANDRA IZMAILOVITCH—The daughter of a Russian general, she attempted the life of the Governor Kurlov of Minsk, who was responsible for the fiendish Jewish pogrom of 1906. Sent to Siberia for life, she was liberated by the February Revolution, in 1917. A member of the Left Social-Revolutionists, she became one of the most active spirits in the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies. A very able literary woman. Since 1919 imprisoned by the Bolsheviki. In very poor health. See page 76 et seq.

IRINA KACHOVSKAYA—A granddaughter of Kachovsky, the "Dekabrist" rebel against Nikolas I. who had been hanged by the Tsarist executioner in 1826, she was condemned to 15 years' forced labor in 1907 for having fought in the ranks of the Maximalist Union. Freed by the Revolution of 1917, she entered the party of the Left Social Revolutionaries and struggled in its ranks. She took part in the attempt on the life of General Field-Marshall Eichhorn at Kiev in 1918. Condemned to death by the German court-martial, she was liberated by the German Revolution. She prepared for an attempt at the life of General Denikin. After the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion in March, 1921, she was arrested by the Bolsheviks. See page 246.

LEA GOTTMAN—Anarchist woman, many years in the revol. movement. Arrested on eve of All-Russian Anarchist Congress, (Kharkov, Nov. 26, 1920). Among the victims of the Butyrki Prison (Moscow) raid, April 25-26, 1921. Her hunger strikes under the Bolsheviki total about 50 days. Sent to Solovetz. (See her letters).

EKATERINA BULATOVA—In 1914 joined the Social Revolutionist Party. In 1917 became an S. R. Maximalist. Committed suicide while in exile in Kostroma, July, 1924.

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Part VI.

Excerpts from Laws and Regulations.

These excerpts are in large part from material obtained by Dr. Henry F. Ward in the fall of 1924 while in Russia investigating the question of Civil Rights. It is not pretended that they are either exhaustive of the subject or up to date. It is, however, all that was easily available to the Editor, with the time and means at his disposal. Only the Sections of the Criminal Code here reprinted were taken from the copy of the Code in Columbia University Library.

The reader will find in a number of prisoners' documents references to one or more of these articles of the Code. In the overwhelming majority of cases the political prisoners had no public trial of any kind. Usually the authorities inform the prisoner that he is held as having committed an offence under article or articles so-and-so; later, he is informed that sentence has been passed on him under these or other articles of the Code. It will be noted that many of the political prisoners urgently demand a public trial, sometimes even declaring hunger-strikes to force their cases to trial in court.

The disposition of these cases in this manner is made possible by the decree establishing Administrative Exile, reprinted below, and by the powers conferred upon the "G. P. U."

ADMINISTRATIVE EXILE

DECREE OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIETS

(August, 1922)

646. Administrative Exile.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee decrees:

1) For the purpose of isolating persons connected with counter-revolutionary acts, with regard to whom permission is asked of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for isolation above a period of two months, in those cases where it is possible to avoid imprisonment, administrative exile abroad or to certain sections of the Republic is established.

2) A Special Commission of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, functioning under the chairmanship of the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, and with the participation of representatives of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and the People's Commissariat for Justice, confirmed in their appointment

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Irina Kachovskaya

Alexandra Izmailovitch

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by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. is entrusted with cases relating to the exile of individuals.

3) The sentences of exile of each individual person must be accompanied by detailed statements of the reasons for exile.

4) The sentence of exile must indicate the region of the exile, as well as its term.

5) The list of the regions of exile is ratified by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Special Commission.

6) The term of administrative exile cannot exceed three years.

7) The persons to whom administrative exile is applied are deprived for the duration of the exile of active and passive right of suffrage. (No doubt, right of vote as well as participation in election campaigns.—Ed.)

8) Persons exiled to a certain region are under the surveillance of the local organ of the "G. P. U.", which determines the place of residence of the exile in the region.

9) Escape from the place of exile or while on the road to exile is punishable by law, according to Article 95 of the Criminal Code

The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs will promulgate detailed instructions to the local authorities on the basis of the present decree.

(*Signed*) M. KALININ,
The President of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
A. YENUKIDZE,
Secretary of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

August 10th, 1922.

Published in the *Izvestia* of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, No. 185, for August 18, 1922.

ORDER OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS

108. Instructions for the application of the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee concerning administrative exile.

Art. I. Administrative exile is applied to persons whose presence in a certain place (including places within the confines of the Russian Republic) appears, from their activity, their past, their connection with criminal circles, dangerous from the point of view of safeguarding the revolutionary order.

Art. 2. Administrative exiles may be of three different kinds:

a) Exile from a given locality, accompanied by a ban on the right of residence in certain specified places of the Republic.

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b) Exile from a given locality to a definite region of the Republic.
c) Exile outside the confines of the Republic, i. e., abroad.

Art. 3. The local organs of the "G. P. U.", not below the rank of the provincial departments, have the right to recommend the application of administrative exile of all categories, to the Special Commission, through the "G. P. U." and the Administrative-Organization Division of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, with the knowledge and consent of the Presidiums of their Executive Committees, according to clause "a" of Article 2 of the present instructions.

Art. 4. The case of each person recommended for exile must include the following data: a) Name, patronymic, family name. b) Age. c) Class origin. d) Occupation at present and before the revolution. e) Family relations. f) Exact reasons for the exile, with a detailed statement of the necessity for the application.

Art. 5. A recommendation of exile, received through the proper reporter, is to be presented for the consideration of the Special Commission, with the conclusions in the case, of the "G. P. U." or the Administrative-Organization Division of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.

Art. 6. Extracts from the protocols of the Special Commission are to be sent to the "G. P. U." and the Administrative-Organizational Division of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, for execution.

Art. 7. The exile, upon arrival at the destination, is registered with the local organ of the "G. P. U." which fixes the place of residence according to the corresponding instructions.

Art. 8. All the exiles in a certain region are to be accounted for and put under the surveillance of the corresponding organs of the "G. P. U.", subject to a weekly registration.

Art. 9. The case of the exile, i. e., including all that is specified in Article 4, as well as all the personal documents taken away from the exile, and the extract from the protocol of the Special Commission, is to be forwarded to the organ of the "G. P. U." at the place of exile.

Art. 10. Upon arrival at the point of destination, the exile is given by the local organ of the "G. P. U." an identity card indicating whence and where exiled, and the length of the term.

Note: In the case of clause "a" of Article 2, of the present instructions, the exile is deprived of all documents in return for which a certificate with a photograph is issued, indicating whence exiled and for what period, which will serve in place of a passport.

Art. 11. Upon arrival at the point of destination, the exile is to be registered by the department for the distribution of labor, without discrimination (against him as an exile.—Ed.),

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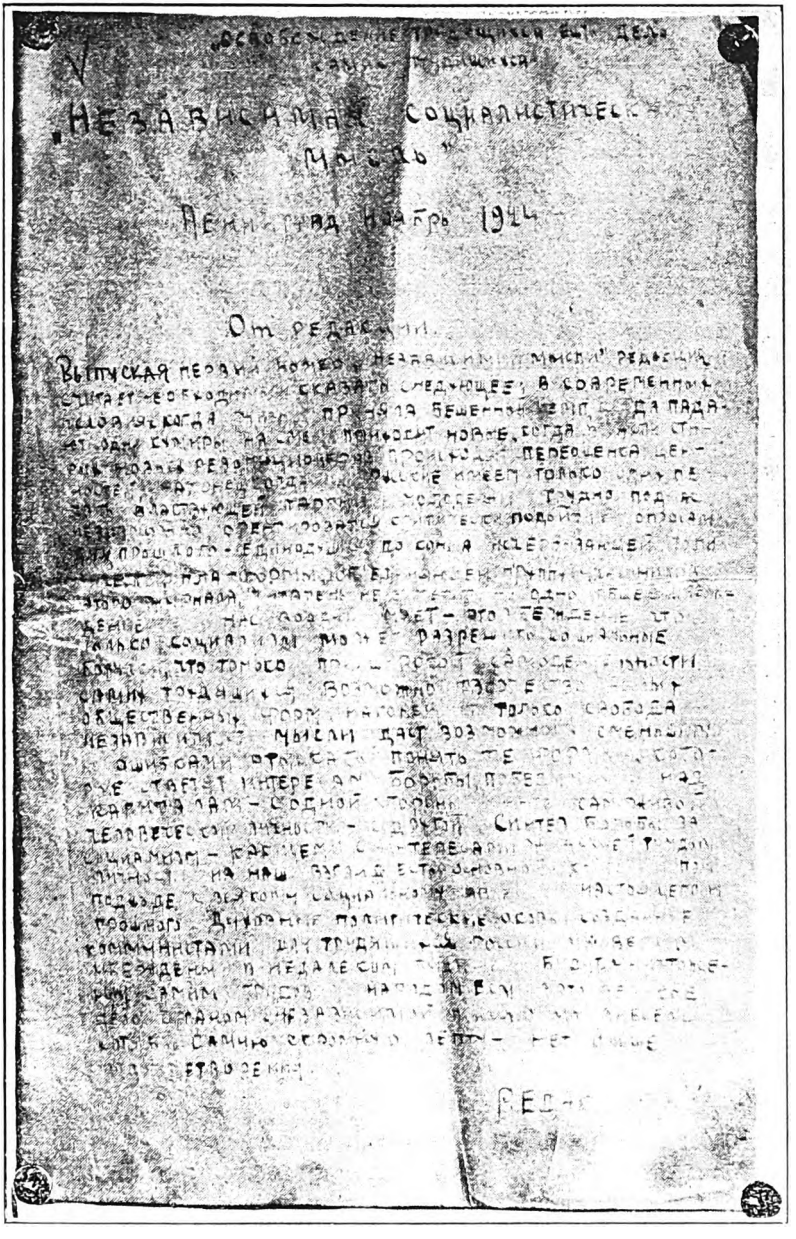
«НЕЗАВИСИМАЯ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКАЯ МЫСЛЬ»

Ленинград ноябрь 1924

От редакции.

FACSIMILIE FIRST PAGE OF ILLEGAL ANARCHIST PUBLICATION IN RUSSIA (1924)

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Art. 12. Exiling is carried out by *étape* (route from prison to prison to final destination.—Ed.) All the existing regulations in this regard apply to the exile.

Note: When exiled from a given place without specifying any destination, (as provided in clause "a", Article 2) the exile is conveyed by *étape*, to the boundary of the region from which the exile is ordered.

Art. 13. In the case of the exile wishing to proceed to the point of destination at his or her own expense, it is necessary to procure permission from the corresponding provincial department or political organ, depending which had initiated the case.

Article 14. The families of the exiles may proceed to the points of destination by railroad or other means of travel on the same basis as other travellers.

Art. 15. The exile, on filing a proper application, may be granted a period not exceeding two weeks for the settlement of private affairs

Art. 16. The administrative exiles may file application, not before the expiration of the first half of their terms, for their return home without completing their sentence, which application, accompanied by the recommendation of the "G. P. U.", is to be forwarded for the consideration of the Special Commission.

Art. 17. Exiles will be prosecuted for escape, on the basis of Art. 95 of the criminal code, in the following cases:

a) For not arriving at the point of departure for exile at the appointed time, when proceeding without convoy, without a good excuse certified to by the organs of the "G. P. U."
b) For not arriving at the point of destination.
c) For leaving the place of exile without the knowledge or permission of the local organ of the "G. P. U." for a period of three days from the time of discovery.
d) For wilful return of the exile to the points from which he or she has been banned.

Art. 18. The wilful return to the Republic of a person exiled abroad is punished by law, according to Article 71 of the criminal code.*

Art. 19. The "G. P. U." and the Administrative-Organizational Division of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs respectively conduct the accounting, registration and execution of the orders of the Special Commission, for which purpose corresponding instructions, supplementing these instructions, are to be issued to the subordinate organs.

*See Article 71, page 305 below.

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Art. 20. Eventualities not covered by these instructions, will be provided for by the Special Commission.

(*Signed*) F. DJERJINSKY,
The People's Commissar for Internal Affairs and the President of the "G. P. U."

January 3, 1923.

FROM THE 1922 CONSTITUTION OF THE S. S. S. R.
THE STATE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNION

61. In order to assure the efforts of the constituent Republics in their struggle against the political and economic counter-revolution and against espionage and brigandage, there be vested a Joint State Political Department attached to the Council of People's Commissars of the Union, the chairman of this Department entering the Council of the People's Commissars of the Union with the right of advisory vote.

62. The State Political Department of the Union shall direct the activities of the local branches of the State Political Department through its representatives in the Councils of the People's Commissariats of the Constituent Republics, acting in accordance with special rules and regulations duly ratified.

63. The Control of the legality of the acts of the State Political Department of the Union shall be exercised by the Attorney General of the Union in accordance with a special decree made by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialists Republics. (The State Political Department of the "G. P. U.")

DECREE OF THE ALL RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*
(Abolishing the Tcheka and establishing the "G. P. U.")
Re Dissolution of the All Russian Tcheka and Re the Conduct of Search, Seizure and Arrests.

In the execution of the decision of the 9th All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the Reorganiaztion of the All-Russian Tcheka for the Combat of Counter-revlution, Speculation and Malfeasance in Office, and its local Departments, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee decrees:

1. To liquidate the All Russian Tcheka and its local Departments.

2. To assign to the PCI (People's Commissariat for the Interior) in addition to the functions indicated in Par. 1 of the Regulation Re PCI, the execution over the entire territory of the RSFSR, the following tasks:

a) Suppression of open counter-revolutionary manifestations, including banditry.
b) Devising ways and means for the protection from, and the combat of, espionage.
c) Protection of railroads and waterways.
d) Political defense of the frontiers of the RSFSR.
e) Combat of smuggling and crossing of the frontiers of the republic without proper permits.

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*Abbreviations in this section and what follows are to be understood as:
Tcheka—Extraordinary Commission.
"G. P. U."—The State Political Department which took the place of the Tcheka.
"O. G. P. U.—"Central, All-Russian "G. P. U."
R. S. F. S. R.—Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics.
Union of S. S. R. or U. S. S. R.—Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.
W. Z. I K.—Central Executive Committee of the U. S. S. R.
P. C. I.—People's Commissarist of Interior.
Vuz.—Institution of Higher Learning.

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f) Execution of special orders of the Praesidium of the WZIK or of the Council of People's Commissars re the defense of the revolutionary system.

3. For the performance of these functions, to establish in the PCI of the RSFSR a "G. P. U." (The State Political Department which has taken the place of the Tcheka.—Ed.) under the personal chairmanship of the People's Commissariat for the Interior or of a substitute assigned by the Council of People's Commissars, and, in the provinces, Political Departments in the Autonomous Republics and Regions at the Central Executive Committees and, in the districts, at the District Executive Committees.

6. Special divisions of troops are placed under the direct orders of the "GPU", the number of these to be designated by the Council of Labor and Defense, and are directed by a separate staff of the troops of the "GPU" of the PCI which is included in the organization of the "G. P. U."

7. In connection with the necessity of taking measures to suppress persons participating in counter-revolutionary acts, banditry, espionage, looting on rail and waterways of communication, smuggling and the crossing of frontiers without permission, the "GPU", Political Departments and also their agents in the counties, have the right to search, seizure and arrest, under the following conditions:

a) Persons caught at the site of a misdemeanor may be arrested, searched and seized by the agents of the "GPU" or the Political Departments or their property seized without special sanction of the Chairman of the "G. P. U." or of the chairman of the Political Department within forty-eight hours following the initiation of the repressive measures which have been undertaken; in all other cases arrests as well as search and seizure are permitted only in accordance with the special ruling of the "GPU" or of the Political Department over the signature of their chairman on special orders, the method of issuance of which is designated in the instructions prepared by the "GPU" and approved by the People's Commissariat for Justice.
b) Not later than within two weeks from the day of arrest, the prisoners must be confronted with the charge.
c) Not later than within two months from the day of arrest the "GPU" must either release the prisoner or, if special circumstances of the case require, obtain permission from the Praesidium of the WZIK for further incarceration for a period to be designated by the WZIK, or must turn the case and the prisoner over to the Court.*

8. All general criminal cases of speculation, malfeasance in office and others, which are in the hands of the Tcheka and its departments at the time of publication of this decree, must, within two weeks be turned over to the Revolutionary Tribunals and to the People's Courts, as may be required, and hereafter all cases of crimes against the Soviet system or of violations of the laws of the RSFSR can be settled only in judicial order by the Revolutionary Tribunal or by the People's Courts as may be required.**

9. The general supervision of the execution of sections 7 and 8 of these regulations is entrusted to the People's Commissariat for Justice.

Chairman of W.Z.I.K., M. KALININ.

Secretary of W.Z.I.K., A. YENUKIDIZE.

February 6, 1922.

Published in No. 30 of the "Izvestia" of the WZIK, Feb. 8, 1922.

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*As to actual expedition of cases of politicals that must be gathered from the various documents reprinted in this book, especially the questionnaires and the citation from a communist newspaper in Part IV.

**See, however, decree on administrative exile, page 296.

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DECREE OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Regulations Re the United "GPU" of the Union of SSR and its Departments Approved November 15, 1923.

1. In accordance with Section 61 of the Constitution of the Union of SSR (collection of Laws of 1923, No. 181, section 782) for the purpose of uniting the revolutionary efforts of the republics for the combat of political and economic counter-revolution, espionage and banditry, there is herewith established at the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of SSR a United "GPU" (OGPU).

2. The Chairman of the "GPU" and his substitute are appointed by the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR (W.Z.I.K.). The Chairman or his substitute is a member of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR with a consulting voice.

3. With the Chairman of the "OGPU" of the USSR there is established a collegium, the members of which are approved by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and these members have all the rights of members of collegiums of the People's Commissariats of the USSR.

4. The "OPGU" of the USSR has charge of

a) The direction of the work of the "GPU" of the federated republics and the special departments of the military districts subject to them, and also of the work of the transport departments of the "GPU" on the rail and water ways of communication in the territories of the respective federated republics.
b) The immediate direction and administration of the special departments at the fronts and in the armies.
c) The organization of the defense of the frontiers of the USSR.
d) The immediate operations of a general nature.

5. The "OGPU" and its local departments have the right of active divisions of the Red Army in the use of rail, water and air transportation, of government means of communication (telegraph, mail, telephone, etc.); in connection with the furnishing of equipment and supplies to special departments, frontier divisions, frontier defense and armies of the "GPU", the "OGPU" has the same rights as divisions of the Red Army.

6. The agents of the "OGPU" and its local branches in their rights, duties and other relations, assume the status of persons in active military service.

7. The "OGPU" has its own independent budget, approved by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and included in the budget of the USSR. The budget of the "OGPU" includes besides the budget of the "OGPU" itself, the budgets of the special departments at the military fronts and in the armies, as well as the budgets of the "GPU" of the federated republics, including therein the budgets of their subordinate special departments of the military district and transport departments of the "GPU".

8. A special corps is placed under the immediate order of the "OGPU" in such number as may be designated by the Council of Labor and Defense of the USSR, being subordinated in every respect to the chairman of the "OGPU" or his substitute.

11. The "OGPU" has its representatives in the Supreme Court of the USSR, approved by the Praesidium of the ZIK of the USSR in accordance with Sec. 75 of the Constitution of the USSR.

12. Supervision of the legality of the activities of the "OGPU" of the USSR is vested with the Attorney General of the Supreme Court of the USSR in the prescribed order and according to the provisions of the regulations concerning the Supreme Court of the USSR, approved in the 3rd session of the first Congress of the ZIK of the USSR, and in the special regulations of the Praesidium of the ZIK of the USSR.

Published in No. 263 of the "Izvestia" of the WZIK Oct. 17, 1923.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE CRIMINAL CODE OF THE S.F.S.R.

Special Section. Part One. Crimes of State. Counter-Revolutionary Crimes.

57. A counter-Revolutionary act is defined as any act directed to overthrowing, or breaking down, or weakening the power of the workers' and peasants' soviets and workers' and peasants' governments existing under the constitution of the R. S. F. S. R. Counter-Revolutionary are also acts in aid of that part of the International bourgeoisie which does not recognize the equality of the communist system of property replacing capitalism, and which tries to overthrow it by intervention, blockade, financing the press, etc.

A Counter-Revolutionary act is defined as an act which, though not immediately directed toward the accomplishment of the aforesaid ends, nevertheless does, and to the knowledge of the person guilty of such act, contain in itself an attack on the fundamental political or economic gains of the proletarian revolution.

58. The organization, for Counter-Revolutionary purposes, of armed riots, or raids into soviet territories by armed detachments or bands, and also participation in any attempt, with these ends in view, to seize power in the center (capital.—Ed.), or locally, or to separate by force any part of its territory from the R. S. F. S. R., or to violate signed treaties, is punishable by the death penalty, and confiscation of all property, always with the reservation that, under certain extenuating circumstances the penalty may be commuted to imprisonment for a period not less than five years, in strict solitary confinement and with confiscation of all property. If the court finds that the offender was not aware of the ultimate objectives of the crime as set forth in this acticle, then his participation in it is punishable by a term of three years of imprisonment.

59. Relations with foreign countries or with their various representatives, for the purpose of inducing them to undertake armed intervention in the affairs of the republic, or declaration of war, or organization of a military expedition, as well as aiding foreign countries after a declaration of war or after an expedition has been sent, regardless of the form which the help takes, is punishable by penalties mentioned in the first part of article 58 of the Criminal Code.

60. Participation in an organization engaged in committing the crimes described in articles 57-59 of the Criminal Code, is punishable by penalties mentioned in parts 1 and 2 of article 58.

61. Participtation in an organization or co-operating with an organization engaged in helping the international bourgeoisie, mentioned in article 57, Code of Criminal Procedure, is punishable by the same penalties.

62. Participation in an organization whose objects are those mentioned in article 57 of the criminal code, by inciting the population to mass riots, non-payment of taxes, and non-execution of its duties, or in any other way, to the obvious injury of the dictatorship of the working class and proletarian revolution, even if armed revolt or armed invasion was not the immediate aim of the activities of the organization, is punishable by the same penalties.

63. Resistance to the normal activity of government institutions and enterprises, or misuse of them for destruction and breaking down of state industry, trade and transportation, for the purpose of committing acts provided for in article 57 (economic Counter-Revolution), is punishable by the penalties provided for in article 58.

66. Participation in espionage of any kind, consisting of transmitting or imparting to, or purloining, or collecting for, foreign countries, or Counter-Revolutionary organizations, with Counter-Revolutionary aims, or for a fee, information having the character of a state secret, particularly of a military nature, is punishable by the penalties provided for in the first part of article 58.

Imparting of the same information without Counter-Revolutionary aims or personal profit, and without knowledge of the possible consequences of such

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acts, is punishable with the penalties provided for by the second part o. article 58.

69. Propaganda and agitation which takes the form of an appeal to overthrow the Soviet power by force, or treason, or by active or passive resistance to the government of the workers and peasants, or mass resistance to militar, or tax obligations placed on citizens, is punishable by imprisonment for a term not less than three years in solitary confinement.

For the same crimes committed under military conditions or at times of riots, the penalty is augmented to capital punishment.

An appeal for non-execution of, or resistance to, the orders of the central or local authority, when no Counter-Revolutionary intentions are established, is punishable by the penalties provided by article 83 of the Criminal Code.

70. Propaganda and agitation directed toward aiding the international bourgeoisie described in article 57, is punishable by expulsion from the R. S. F. S. R. or imprisonment for a term not less than three years.

71. Return within the boundaries of the R. S. F. S. R. in case of exile, a penalty imposed under article 32, subdivision *a*, is punishable by capital punishment. (32a refers to the penalty of deportation abroad).

73. Invention and dissemination with Counter- Revolutionary intent, of false rumors or unverified news, which could provoke a public panic, mistrust of authority or discredit the latter, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term not less than six months.

If the actions are not proved to have been Counter-Revolutionary, the penalty may be reduced to three months of forced labor.

83. Agitation and propaganda of various kinds, including incitement to the commission of crimes mentioned in articles 71-81, and also invoking national hatred and conflict, is punishable by imprisonment for a term not less than one year, in solitary confinement.

If the agitation and propaganda took place in war time and was directed to non-compliance by citizens with their military duties, or duties connected with military activity, the penalty may be increased to capital punishmnet.

87. Offensive disrespect shown to the R. S. F. S. R., taking the form of abuse of the state coat-of-arms, flag, memorials, of the revolution, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term not less than six mnoths.

88. Public offensive conduct toward various representatives of authority while performing their duties, is punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term not less than six months.

STATUTES OF THE MAIN ADMINISTRATION FOR AFFAIRS OF LITERATURE AND PUBLISHING (GLAVLIT).

Collection of Legal Enactments, 1922, No. 40, Article 461).

1. For the purpose of the unification of all forms of censorship for printed matter there is established the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing under the People's Commissariat of Education, with local organs under the Provincial Departments of Public Instruction.

2. Upon the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and its local organs is made incumbent:

a) The preliminary examination of all matter intended for publication or dissemination, both in manuscript and in print, of periodical and non-periodical publications, photographs, drawings, maps, and similar matter;

b) The issuance of permits for the right to publish various printed matter as well as organs of the periodical and non-periodical press;

c) The compilation of lists of printed matter prohibited from sale and distribution;

d) The promulgation of rules, orders and instructions concerning affairs of the press, to be binding upon all organs of the press, publishing concerns, typographies, libraries and book stores.

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3. The Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and its organs prohibit the publication and distribution of matter:

a) Containing agitation against the Soviet Power;
b) Disclosing the military secrets of the Republic;
c) Exciting public opinion through the communication of false reports;
d) Exciting nationalistic and religious fanaticism;
e) Of a pornographic nature.

4. The publications of the Communist International, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, the Provincial Committees of the Russian Communist Party and, in general, the entire press of the Communist Party, as well as the publications of the State Publishing Department and of the Main Politico-Educational Committee, the "Izvestia of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee" and the scientific works of the Academy of Sciences are exempt from the censorship. With regard to these publications it is made incumbent upon the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and its organs to adopt measures for the full safeguarding of the interests of the military censorship. As for special departmental publications, they are to be exempted from the censorship only by agreement between the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and the respective People's Commissariat. . . . .

6. At the head of the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing stands a manager appointed by the collegium of the People's Commissariat of Education, and two assistants appointed by the same collegium by agreement with the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic and the State Political Department,* to be subject to the authority of the manager as well as of the respective organ.

7. The local organs of the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing in the larger centers, such as Petrograd, Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov, etc. (as determined by the Main Administration), are organized the same as the Main Administration. In all other Provincial capitals there are censors to be appointed by the Provincial Departments of Public Instruction and confirmed in office by the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing.

8. Apart from cases where certain localities are placed in a state of martial law, where the organs of the censorship in the different localities are transferred, from considerations of military necessity, by agreement between the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic and the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing, to the jurisdiction of the War Department, or else the latter may appoint to those organs a special censor.

9. The surveillance of performances and theatrical presentation is made incumbent upon the managers of the Provincial Departments of Public Instruction.

10. The organs of the State Political Department, "G. P. U.", are charged with combatting the dissemination of matter prohibited by the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and by its organs; the surveillance of typographies, customs and frontier stations; combating surreptitious publications and their distribution; combating the importation from abroad, for distribution in the territory of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, of literature which it is forbidden to circulate; supervising the sale of Russian and foreign literature; and the confiscation of books prohibited by the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing and its organs, according to the lists mentioned in Section "c" of Paragraph 2.

NOTE:—The lists issued by the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing are obligatory for the strict and unfailing guidance of the organs of the State Political Department. Concerning publications not included in the above mentioned lists, the State Political Department in each separate case raises the question of permission or prohibition of their circulation before the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing.

11. Managers of typographies and factory administrations are bound, at the risk of legal responsibility, to watch strictly that matter printed in their typographies be provided with the stamp of the Main Administration for Affairs

*"G. P. U.", successor to the *Tcheka*.

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of Literature and Publishing, or of its organs, except matter enumerated in Paragraph 4.

12. Owners and managers of typographies are obliged to submit to the organs of the censorship five copies each of every kind of printed matter immediately following the printing.

(Signed) For the President of the Council of People's Commissars,
A. I. RYKOV.
For the Administrative Chief of the Council of People's Commissars,
V. SMOLIANINOV.
Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars,
L. FOTIEVA.

June 6, 1922.

INSTRUCTION

From the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing (Glavlit) to Its Local Organs.

I. Rights and Functions of the GLAVLIT and Its Local Organs.

1. The Glavlit and its local organs carry out all forms of the censorship (military, political, idealogical, etc.)

2. All organs of the press, except those exempted from the censorship under the decree, are obliged to submit to the Glavlit and its local organs for preliminary examination everything intended for the press.

3. Glavlit undertakes the preliminary examination of all matter intended for publication or distribution, both in manuscript and in print, periodical and non-periodical publications, photographs, drawings, and similar matter (Russian as well as that imported from abroad).

4. It handles the issuance of permits for the right to publish various works, as well as the organs of the periodical and non-periodical press, and the right to organize new publishing concerns.

5. It compiles lists of printed matter prohibited from sale and distribution (Russian literature as well as foreign).

6. It issues rules, orders and instructions regarding affairs of the press, which are binding upon all the organs of the press: publishing concerns, typographies, libraries and book stores.

7. The censorship of printed matter consists in:

a) Preventing the printing of information not to be made public (see enumeration);*

b) Preventing the printing of articles which are of a character manifestly hostile to the Communist Party and the Soviet authority;

c) Preventing all kinds of publications which carry an idealogy that is hostile to us in fundamental questions (social, religious, economic, the nationalities problem, the domain of art, etc.);

d) Preventing the publication of the yellow press, pornography, false publicity, etc.;

e) Expunging from articles their sharpest points (facts, figures, characterizations) which compromise the Soviet authority and the Communist Party.

8. Glavlit has the right to stop publications, reduce their circulation, and shut down publishing concerns in cases of obviously criminal activity, bringing the responsible heads to court or turning over their cases to the local organs of the State Political Department.

NOTE:—In the event that there should be need of closing any publishing concern, the local organ of the Glavlit is to inquire about it at headquarters. Only when the necessity for closing should be extremely urgent may it on its own authority stop the publishing concern, reporting to headquarters for its approval.

9. The Political Control Department of the State Political Department renders to the Glavlit technical assistance in the surveillnace of the descrip-

* Statutes of Glavlit, Paragraph 3.

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tion of the press, typographies, book trade, and the import and export of printed matter from abroad and beyond the frontiers of the Republic, according to the decree.

II. Organization and Structure.

1. At the head of the Glavlit there stands, according to the decree, a manager with two assistants, representatives of the Revolutionary War Council to the Republic and the State Political Deparment.

2. At the head of the Territorial Department stands a manager appointed by the Section of Public Instruction (O. N. O.), with two assistants, representatives of the Army Commissars and the Central Committee of the State Political Department.

3. Territorial Departments are to be formed in the following territorial centers (here follows blank space).

4. The Territorial Departments organize their Provincial organs in accordance with the attached lists of staffs.

5. The Territorial Department is held accountable for all the work to the Glavlit and renders its reports to it twice a month.

6. In matters of a departmental character, the representatives of the organs of the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic and of the State Political Department in a Territorial Department of the Glavlit may apply directly to the representative of their own department at the Glavlit.

III. Functions of the Subdivisions of the Territorial Department of the Glavlit.

1. A Territorial Department of the Glavlit consists of the following Subdivisions: Library, Administrative-Instructional, and the Secretariat.

The Instruction then goes on to explain the method of distributing the work among the subdivisions of the Territorial Department of the Glavlit.

In the Literary Subdivision is to be done the work of the censorship proper. In the Administrative-Instructional,—besides the administrative-controlling and organization-instructional work—there is to be kept account of publishing concerns, typographies, the book trade, libraries; there is to be the surveillance of possible violations on their part of the existing rules, etc.; also, a subsequent military censorship of such publications as are exempt from preliminary censorship. The Secretariat, the library and archives carry out the usual functions.

In conclusion, the Instruction lays down general guiding rules for the Provincial Departments.

RULES GOVERNING THE MAINTENANCE OF TYPOGRAPHIES

Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense on the Method of Manufacturing and Trading in Printing Machinery and Type.

(Collection of Legal Enactments, 1922, No. 4, Article 589).

The Council of Labor and Defense has decreed:

1. The purchase and sale of printing machines of all kinds, such as typographical, lithographical, rotary, Boston, American, and other such typesetting machines, as well as of machines that print by all kinds of photo-mechanical processes, and of type, is to be carried out with the observance of the rules laid down in the present decree.

2. The manufacture of and trading in the machines and type referred to in Paragraph 1 is permitted to the State trading and manufacturing enterprises of the polygraphic industry established for this purpose, as well as to private persons and associations.

3. A private person or association, when desirous of opening a trading or manufacturing enterprise in this branch, is obliged to obtain a preliminary permit from the Administrative Department of the Provincial or District Soviet Executive Committee, wherever the enterprise is located.

NOTE:—The purchase of the articles mentioned in Paragraph 1 in a foreign country is to be made with the observance of the rules provided for foreign trade.

4. The sale of the articles mentioned in Paragraph 1 may be made:

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a) To the associations and enterprises mentioned in Paragraphs 2 and 3, without any restrictions;

) To other institutions, organizations both State and private, also to individual persons, upon presentation of licenses for the maintenance of typographies, lithograpries and other such polygraphic enterprises, or with the permission of the Administrative Department in each separate case.

5. All enterprises, both State and private, which have the right of sale and purchase of the printing machines and type referred to in Paragraph 1 are obliged to keep a strict account of all machines and type manufactured, in stock, and sold.

6. The supervision of the execution of the present rules is made incumbent upon the People's Commissariat of the Interior, which is to issue, within a period of two weeks, by agreement with the Supreme Council of National Economy, an instruction concerning the method of accountancy, the issuance of licenses, and the surveillance of the trade in the articles referred to.

Signed: For the President of the Council of Labor and Defense,
A. I. RYKOV.
Secretary of the Council of Labor and Defense,
L. FOTIEVA.

July 26, 1922.

(Published in "Economic Life" No. 177, August 9, 1922).

THE METHOD OF OPENING PRINTING ENTERPRISES AND THEIR SURVEILLANCE.

Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense.

(Collection of Legal Enactments, 1922, No. 80, Article 1019).

1. The opening of printing enterprises (typographies, lithographies, metallographies) is permitted to State institutions, co-operative and public organizations, and private persons, with the observance of the rules laid down in the present decree.

2. Permits for the opening of the printing enterprises mentioned in Paragraph 1 are issued by the Administrative Departments of the Provincial and District Soviet Executive Committees, after a decision by the Provincial Council of National Economy.

NOTE: In filing petitions with the Administrative Departments for a license, the proprietors of printing enterprises are obliged to submit, in three copies, filled-in questionaires of a special form for the owner and manager of the printing enterprise. Associations are obliged to submit a questionnaire in three copies for every member of the administrative organ of the Association and for the responsible manager or administrator of a given enterprise.

3. A permit issued for the opening of a printing enterprise remains valid for one year; should the enterprise not have been put into operation at the expiration of this term, a new permit is required for its opening.

4 The transfer of printing enterprises from one person to another is allowed only with the permission of the Administrative Department, after a decision by the Provincial Council of National Economy.

5. Persons who have come into possession of a printing enterprise through inheritance or by virtue of the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of December 10, 1921* are obliged, within a period of two months from the moment of the transfer of the enterprise to them, to obtain a permit, in the manner provided in Paragraph 3 of the present decree.

In the event that no permit should be obtained within the period of time indicatd above, the owner of the printing enterprise is bound to stop the work and turn over, within a period of 6 months, the enterprise to another person, who has the proper permit, or else to liquidate the enterprise.

NOTE: For persons who are in actual possession of printing enterprises at the moment of the promulgation of the present decree, the terms indicated above are to be reckoned as from the day of the publication of the decree.

* Collection of Legal Enactments, 1921, No. 79, Article 684.

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6. State institutions, co-operative and public organizations, and private persons, in filing petitions for permits to open printing enterprises, are obliged to furnish information as regards the capacity of the equipment of the enterprises, in the forms provided by the Supreme Council of National Economy and the People's Commissariat of the Interior.

Of any further change in the capacity of the equipment, the owners of printing enterprises, among them also State institutions, are obliged to report within the period of one month to the Administrative Department and the Provincial Council of National Economy.

7. Every printing enterprise, including State enterprises, is bound to keep a "corded book" (consisting of a number of loose pages fastened by a cord running through the margin, with the ends of the cord firmly attached to the cover and held in place by a wax seal of the proper government department or bureau, so as to prevent substitutions of other pages.—Translator's note) sealed by the Administrative Department, in which is to be entered all matter intended for printing, showing the customer, the number of copies, the format of the publication, and whether it is printed with the permission of the censorship or whether it is not subject to censorship.

8. The checking of what has been entered in the "corded book" with the work actually accomplished and in process of accomplishment is done by the representatives of the Administrative Department, but may also be done by the representatives of the Provincial Council of National Economy.

9. On every copy put into circulation by the press of the State, co-operative, private, and other enterprises must be shown: the name and address of the enterprise and, if the publication has been submitted to the censorship, the approval of the censorship.

10. The general supervision of the execution of the present rule is made incumbent upon the People's Commissariat of the Interior, which is to work out within a period of two weeks an instruction, by agreement with the Supreme Council of National Economy.

Signed: For the President of the Council of Labor and Defense,
L. KAMENEV.
Secretary,
L. FOTIEVA.

December 2, 1922.

(Published in the "Izvestia" of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, No. 187, December 19, 1922).

INSTRUCTION No. 37

On the Manner of the Issuance of Permits for Trading in Printing Machines and Type and the Opening of Printing Enterprises.

("Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of the Interior," No. 5-6, Feb. 5, 1923).

In pursuance of the Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense of July 26, 1922, on the Method of Manufacturing and Trading in Printing Machinery and Type, and of the Decree of December 2, 1922, on the Method of Opening Printing Enterprises and their Surveillance, the following is proposed for guidance:

CHAPTER I.

The Method of Opening Enterprises for Trading in Printing Machinery and Type.

1. Private persons and associations desirous of opening a trade in printing machines and type are obliged to submit a declaration and questionnaire (Form No. 1), in three copies, to the Administrative Department in the place where the trade is to be opened, in order to obtain a preliminary permit, without which the Financial Departments have no right to issue licences.

NOTE: Associations must file the questionnaires in three copies for each member of the administrative organ of the association and for the responsible manager or administrator of a given enterprise.

2. Private enterprises for trading in printing machines and type which have come into existence prior to the issuance of the Decree of the Council

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of Labor and Defense of July 26th last, are obliged at once to obtain permission as provided by Paragraph 1 of the present Instruction. Until they receive the aforementioned permission, the named enterprises have the right to engage in trade only with those articles of polygraphic equipment which have not been named in Paragraph 1 of the Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense.

CHAPTER II.

The Method of Opening Printing Enterprises.

1. State institutions, co-operative and public organizations and private persons who are desirous of opening a printing enterprise are obliged to file a declaration and questionnaire (Form No. 1) in three copies for the owner, or, when the enterprise is to be opened by institutions or organizations, for each member of the administration organ and for the responsible manager or administrator of the enterprise (Form No. 2).

2. All State institutions, co-operative and public organizations, and private persons who at the moment of the publication of the Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense of December 2, 1922, are in possession of printing enterprises are obliged in the course of two months to obtain permits in the manner provided by Paragraph 1, Chapter II, of the Instruction.

3. The transfer of an enterprise to another institution, association or person may be made only with the permission of the Administrative Department. The institution, association or private person acquiring the enterprise is obliged to obtain a permit in the manner provided by Paragraph 1.

4. When there is a change in the personnel of the leading organ of the institution or organization having a printing enterprise, also in case of a change of managers or administrators of the enterprise, the institutions and organizations report it to the Administrative Department, submitting for the new persons questionnaires in 3 copies, as provided by Paragraph 1.

CHAPTER III.

Method of Surveillance

1. Administrative Departments are obliged to show particular care in issuing permits of this kind, strictly observing the method laid down in the present Instruction.

2. All enterprises trading in machines and type are bound to keep a strict account of all machines and type passing through the given enterprise.

Whenever machines and type are sold, there must be shown in the books the number and date of the permit of the Administrative Department on the basis of which the given machine or type is sold, as well as the name of the acquiring enterprise.

In entering upon the ledger the machines and type arriving at the enterprise, the enterprise from which the given machine or type has been received must be shown.

3. All enterprises trading in machines and type are obliged every month to render an account concerning the movements of the machines and type to the local organ of the Administration of the Polygraphic Industry of the Supreme Council of National Economy, and copies of the reports are to be sent to the Administrative Department.

4. Printing enterprises are obliged to keep in a special book a strict account of the equipment of the enterprise and show the place where the articles of equipment were obtained. Each change in th equipment is to be reported to the Administrative Department and the Provincial Council of National Economy.

5. Each printing enterprise is obliged to submit every month to the Administrative Department and the Supreme Council of National Economy an account of all executed and received orders, with all necessary information, which is to be entered in the "corded book" of the enterprise, according to Paragraph 7 of the Decree of the Council of Labor and Defense of December 2.

6. The Administrative Departments are bound to see to the observance on the part of the enterprises of the rules provided by the Decree of December

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2, to the keeping of the provided accounts, and to the timely presentation of the accounts.

7. All violations of the rules for the opening of printing enterprises, and failure to submit the accounts provided for the printing enterprises and for enterprises trading in printing machines and type, are punished by legal process according to Articles 225 and 226 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

Signed: For the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs,
BIELOBORODOV.
Manager of the Administrative-Organizational Department,
RAVICH.

EXCERPTS FROM LAWS ON ASSOCIATIONS AND MEETINGS

Instructions for the Registration of Societies, Unions and Associations.

Pursuant to the ruling of the Praesidium of the All Russian Central Executive Committee, June 12, 1922, and to the ruling of the All Russian Central Executive Committee and of the Council of People's Commissars, August 3, 1922, no society, union or association, with the exception of trade unions affiliated with the All Russian Central Federation of Trade Unions (WZSPS) may initiate its activities without previous registration with the People's Commissariat for the Interior (PCI) and with its local departments.

1. Persons or groups desiring to establish a society, union or association upon approval of its constitution by the proper department must submit to the PCI or to its local department as may be required (a) Minutes of the organization meeting of the society, union or association, in triplicate. (b) Constitution of the society, in triplicate, (c) Copy of the application for permit to organize as submitted to the proper department and copy of the constitution as approved by the proper department, in triplicate, (d) data showing the location of the executive offices of the organization, the area covered in its activities, the places where it proposes to have branches and authorized affiliations, in triplicate, (e) List of charter members with the following data concerning them, in triplicate: surname, given name and father's given name, residence and address, social status, general service record since 1914, party affiliations, economic status, (f) Registration fee of R100.

NOTE 1: Subsequent reports must be submitted listing the membership of the Executive Committee, and the changes thereof, in accordance with the outline given under item "e", section 1.

NOTE 2: All literature already published by societies, unions and associations is subject to the general rules in force for the censorship of printed publications.

2. All societies, unions and associations already actually in existence at the time of issuance of these instructions must submit to the PCI: (a) Constitution of the Society, list of charter members, and members of the current Executive Committee, following the outline given under Par. "e", Sec. 1., copy of the application for permit to organize as submitted to the proper department ,and copy of the constitution as approved by the proper department, in triplicate. (b) data showing the location of the executive offices of the organization, the area covered in its activities, list of its branches, their location, and list of authorized affiliations and their addresses, in triplicate.

3. The PCI and its departments in the localities where the unions, societies and associations function issue a certificate of registration which must be preserved in the records of the unions, societies and associations.

4. Societies, unions or associations not registered within two weeks after the date of publication of these instructions are declared disbanded.

Chairman of W.Z.I.K., M. KALININ.
Secretary of W.Z.I.K., A. YENUKIDZE.

Moscow Kremlin, August 10, 1922.

6. Approval must be withheld from such proposed societies or unions whose aims and methods of activities violate the constitution of the RSFSR and its laws.

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In accordance with section 5 of these regulations the People's Commissariat for the Interior and its local departments must in each and every case notify the organizers of the societies, unions and associations of the reasons for withholding approval.

7. Refusal to approve may be appealed by the organizers to the Praesidium of the Gubispolkom (State Executive Committee) when refusal comes from a branch of its administration and to the Praesidium of the WZIK when refusal comes from the People's Commissariat for the Interior.

10. It is the duty of the People's Commissariat for the Interior and its branches to watch the legality of the activities of societies and unions and their branches. Especially are the branches of the People's Commissariat for the Interior required to become acquainted with the financial and administrative operations of the approved and registered societies and unions from the viewpoint of their adherence to the laws of the RSFSR and to the approved and registered constitutions of the respective societies and unions.

11. Upon discovery of evidence in the activities of approved and registered societies and unions of instances enumerated in section 6 as reasons for the withholding of approval and registration, the People's Commissariat for the Interior, or a department of the Gubispolkom, as may be required, issues a ruling with reference to the disbanding and dissolution of their activities.

NOTE: Appeals against the rulings made under this section, when made by the district branches of the administration, may be directed to the Praesidium of the Gubispolkom; when made by the People's Commissariat for the Itnerior, to the Praesidium of the WZIK.

(See Section 18 of the Civil Code RSFSR Page 10). (Not applicable to Trades Unions.—Ed.)

Chairman of W.Z.I.K., M. KALININ.
For the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars—A. TSURUPA.
Secretary of W.Z.I.K., A. YENUKIDZE.

Moscow, Kremlin, August 3, 1922.

CONVENTIONS, MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Regulations of the Praesidium of the WZIK "Re Method of Issuance of Permits for Conventions and Conferences" (Excerpt)

The Praesidium of the WZIK resolves:

1. To require that conventions or All Russian Conferences of various organizations, unions and associations called by these organizations or their departments cannot be convened without proper permission of the People's Commissariat for the Interior. Permission for local conventions or conferences must be secured from the Gubispolkom.

Chairman of W.Z.I.K., M. KALININ.
Secretary of W.Z.I.K., A. YENUKIDZE.

Moscow, Kremlin, June 12, 1922.

Instructions re Issuance of Permits for the Calling of Conventions and Meetings of various Organizations, Unions and Associations.

In the promulgation of regulations of the WZIK on June 12, 1922 the following instructions are issued concerning the issuance of permits by the People's Commissariat for the Interior for the calling of conventions and conferences of various unions, organizatins and associatins.

1. Organizations, unions and associations calling conventions and conferences must for a local conference submit to the Gubispolkom one month before and for an All Russian conference submit to the People's Commissariat for the Interior 2 months in advance, the following: (a) Data concerning the registration with the People's Commissariat of the Interior and the approval of the constitution by the proper department, in triplicate, (b) The decision of the Executive Committee of the association or union as to the time, place and purpose of the convention or conference, in triplicate, (c) Order of business of the Conference or Convention, in triplicate, (d) Detailed information as to

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the basis of representation and the probable attendance of the Convention or Conference, in triplicate, (e) Registration fee of R100.

2. Wihin the period of three weeks the People's Commissariat for the Interior, if the Conference or Convention is All Russian and within the period of one week, the Gubispolkom, if the conference is a local one (a) Inquires into the registration of the given society or association and its approved constitution, (b) inquires whether the order of business of the Conference adhered to the constitution and purposes of the society or association, (e) communicates with the proper department as to the desirability of the proposed conference or convenions, (f) issues its permission or refusal for the calling of the conference, two weeks in advance, if the convention is a local one and a month in advance, if the convention is an all Russian one. (Not applicable to Trades Unions and Communist conventions called by the Central Executive Committee.—Ed.)

Chairman C.I.K. M. KALININ.
Secretary C.I.K., A. YENUKIDZE.

(Izvestia of the WZIK Aug. 12, 1922, No. 180).

Instructions No. 278, Method of Application of Sec. 5 and 10 of the Decisions of the WZIK Re Method of Approval and Registration of Societies and Unions Not Organized for Profit, and the Method of Supervision of Their Activities, Sept. 1st, 1922.

1. The general method of registration applies to societies and associations of students of higher institutions of learning (VUZ) societies and associations of scientific workers as well as mixed societies of both of these with the provision that:

a) Before registration of societies or associations containing only students of a given VUZ the advice of the administration of the VUZ must be requested.

b) When such a society aims to unite students of several VUZ, the advice of the chief of technical education must be requested. (In Petrograd and in Siberia, the representatives of the People's Commissariat of Education for VUZ).

c) Before registration of societies and associations of intellectual workers (with the exception of trade unions and KUBU) as well as mixed societies of students and intellectual workers, the advice of the chief of the scientific department—and the chief of the department of technical education—must be requested.

The approval of the constitution of the societies or associations must be registered with the proper department within two weeks from the date of receipt of the constitution by the faculty in the case of societies indicated in Par "a" Sec. 1; for societies indicated in Pars. "b" and "c" of Sec. 1, within a month from the day of the receipt of the constitution by the proper department. The lapsing of the period set for approval is accepted as indicating approval of the constitution.

3. Meetings of the societies legally registered in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs take place within the precincts of the VUZ in accordance with the constitution, but on obligatory notice to the faculty of the VUZ not later than 24 hours prior to the meeting. Responsibility for adherence to the programme within the provision of the constitution rests with the faculty of the VUZ, which has the right to withhold permission for the calling of the meeting.

5. A book of records of the meetings organized is kept at the VUZ and notices about the calling of meetings is entered therein. Responsibility for abiding by the order of business rests upon those signing it (the duty of the members of the Praesidium of the society), and upon the presiding officers of the meeting.

The administration of VUZ has the right to send its representatives to all meetings. These representatives may declare a meeting closed in case there is evident departure from the order of business indicated in the notice, dis-

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orders in the meetings, or a request by the presiding officer that the meeting be closed.

6. Refusal to permit organization of a meeting or allegedly unwarranted closing of a meeting may be appealed.

7. The administration of each VUZ may, on the basis of these rules, issue special instructions concerning the issuance of meeting calls and the securing of permission for such meetings.

8. All meetings must keep minutes signed by the chairman and secretary.

9. Meetings outside of the precincts of the VUZ are subject to the general regulations.

For the People's Commissar for the Interior M. POLIAKOW.
For the People's Commissar for Education V. MAXIMOWSKI.

(Bulletin of the Commissariat for the Interior, No. 35, Sept. 20, 1922.)

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NOTE: When this book was already in press, the Editor's attention was called to the following provisions of the new Russian Constitution just published in the "Nation" of June 24, 1925. Exactly what practical effect, if any, on civil liberties in Russia these provisions will have, is not yet known.

1. The present constitution of the RSFSR is based on the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of the Laboring and Exploited Masses adopted by the Third All-Russian Congress of the Soviets and on the principles of the constitution of the RSFSR adopted at the Fifth All-Russian Congress of the Soviets; it has undertaken to guarantee the dictatorship of the proletariat with the aim of suppressing the bourgeoisie, of abolishing the exploitation of man and of establishing socialism under which there will be no class division and no state coercion.

2. In order to insure for the toilers actual freedom of opinon the RSFSR abolishes the dependence of the press upon capital and transfers to the working class and the peasantry all technical and material means for the publications of newspapers, pamphlets, books, and other printed matter and guarantees their unobstructed circulation throughout the country.

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4. In order to insure for the toilers actual freedom of assembly the RSFSR recognizes the right of all citizens of the Soviet Republic freely to organize meetings processions, etc., and places at the disposal of the working class and the peasantry all premises suitable for public gatherings.

5. In order to insure for the toilers actual freedom of association, the RSFSR, which destroyed the economic and political power of the propertied classes and thus removed the obstacles which hitherto in capitalist society have prevented the workers and peasants from enjoying freedom of organization and action, helps the worker and peasants to unite and organize.

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